This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

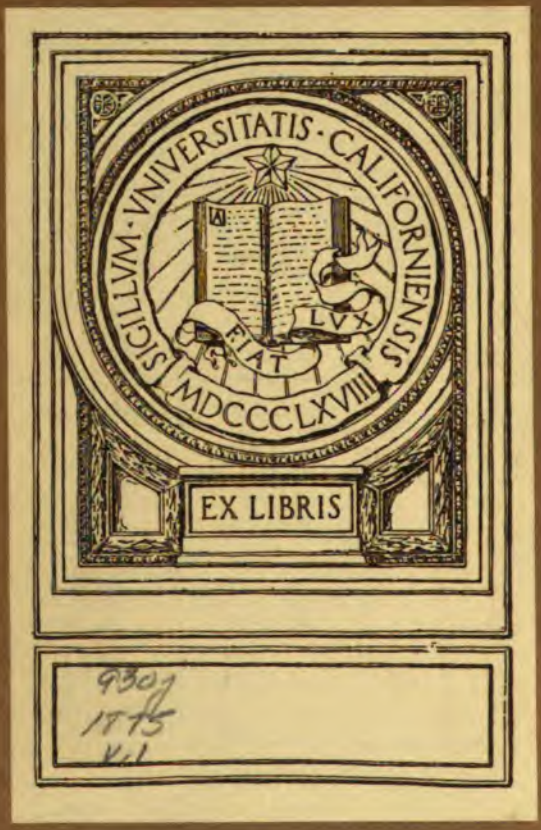
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS
930j
1875
v.1
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE WORKS OF BEN JONSON.

Digitized by Google

The Muses' fairest light in no dark time;
The wonder of a learned age; the line
Which none can pass; the most proportion'd wit,
To nature, the best judge of what was fit;
The deepest, plainest, highest, clearest pen;
The voice most echo'd by consenting men;
THE SOUL WHICH ANSWER'D BEST TO ALL WELL SAID
BY OTHERS, AND WHICH MOST REQUITAL MADE.

CLEVELAND.

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Gerard Honthorst.

Digitized by Google

THE WORKS OF

Ben Jonson

WITH NOTES CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY

AND A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

BY W. GIFFORD ESQ.

WITH INTRODUCTION AND APPENDICES BY

LIEUT.-COL. F. CUNNINGHAM

IN NINE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON
BICKERS AND SON
HENRY SOTHERAN AND CO.
1875

Digitized by Google

930.1
1875
v.1

714652

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

CHISWICK PRESS:—PRINTED BY WHITTINGHAM AND WILKINS,
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

Digitized by Google

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE CANNING,

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF CONTROL FOR

INDIA, &C. &C.

THIS EDITION OF THE WORKS OF BEN JONSON,

IN TESTIMONY OF THE SINCEREST ADMIRATION OF HIS

TRANSCENDENT TALENTS,

OF THE HIGHEST RESPECT FOR HIS PUBLIC PRINCIPLES

AND PRIVATE VIRTUES,

AND IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE FRIENDSHIP

WITH WHICH, FOR A LONG SERIES OF YEARS, HE

HAS HONOURED THE EDITOR, IS, WITH

PRIDE AND PLEASURE

MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

July 3rd, 1816. [WILLIAM GIFFORD.]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

	Page
Prefatory Notice	i
Memoirs of Ben Jonson	xxi
Proof of Ben Jonson's Malignity, from the Commentators on Shakespeare	cxciii
Ancient Commendatory Verses on Ben Jonson	ccxxxvi
Portraits of Jonson	cclxxii
Every Man in his Humour	1
Additional Notes	153

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFATORY NOTICE.

THE publishers having determined, for reasons so good as to admit of no gainsaying, to make this reprint of Ben Jonson's Works an exact reproduction, with improved type and paper, of the original of 1816, and the greater part of the "Life" being in fact set up in type before I became accidentally aware of their intention to enter upon such an undertaking at all, I was only in time to offer a few suggestions, which without in the slightest degree interfering with the integrity of Gifford's text, might make the work more convenient for reference, and place the reader in possession of the few new pieces which have drifted into light during the long interval of fifty-eight years since Gifford's publication. In this view, as a most essential aid to the student, and indeed to every reader who looks backward or forward, I pointed out the necessity of inserting the numbers of the acts and scenes in the running heading of every page of the regular dramas; and being anxious to add in every possible way to the importance of those admirable *Explorata, or Discoveries*, the merits of which have never yet been adequately appreciated, I requested that the line of separation between the subjects treated of might be more distinctly marked, and that a number might be affixed to each separate section; and last, though not least, I pressed the need of a proper table of

Digitized by Google

contents for the seventh, eighth, and ninth volumes, which had been left by Gifford with nothing more than such a general idea of what might be inside of them, as was contained upon his title-page! the fact being that few works that can be mentioned stand more in need of assistance of this kind, the matter (I speak more particularly of the two last volumes) being so multifarious, and the arrangement, for the most part, so completely unshackled by any discoverable system. Next came the difficulty about the commencing pages of the ninth volume, where Gifford, as I believe, intended in the first instance to print the Newcastle MS., entire, but got frightened by the free nature of some portions, and, endeavouring first to emasculate them, and then to cram the purified portions into a note of portentous length, involved the whole in inextricable confusion. This I have done my best to obviate, and I believe all is now preserved which can honestly be said to be worth preserving. Of the pieces unknown to Gifford, I beg to call particular attention to the *Ode Allegoriké* for which we are indebted to the researches of Mr. Collier, and which will be found at vol. ix. p. 353, and the translation of Martial's *Vitam quæ faciunt beatiorem* (p. 345). I make no apology for reprinting the whole first act of *Every Man in his Humour*, as it stood when Lorenzo Senior was Old Knowell, and the gates of Florence represented Moor Fields. I should like to have given the whole, but want of space and want of health alike said no.

It is impossible to read the *Conversations with Drummond*, as Mr. David Laing has given them to us, without lamenting that Gifford had not seen them in this form before he commenced his labours. His work might then have been free from its greatest blot, the more than rabid insolence and injustice with which Drummond is treated on every possible and impossible occasion. There is nothing in the

Digitized by Google

Conversations, in their worst form, condensed and "arranged" by some conceited clerk, and garbled by the unscrupulous Theophilus Cibber, to justify one-twentieth part of the abuse which Gifford has heaped upon their recorder; and even that twentieth is left without foundation, when we discover how much has been omitted, how much misplaced, and how much interpolated. Nothing indeed remains to be objected to except the unexpectedly severe summing-up of his guest's character, which Drummond wrote immediately after Jonson quitted Hawthornden for the last time. I have expressed my view of this at length in a note in the proper place, but I was not then aware that Sir Walter Scott, in his *Provincial Antiquities*, published long before Mr. Laing's important discovery had been made, had stated the whole case with peculiar felicity.[1] "It must be allowed that Drummond and Jonson were men so different in genius and situation, that it may have been difficult for the former to attain a just, or at least an accurate, estimate of the latter. His own powers did not much exceed a decent mediocrity, while Jonson had all the eccentricity of genius. Drummond had lived a retired scholar within his paternal shades: Jonson was a man of the world, a man of the town, accustomed to the freedoms of *The Mermaid*, and whom, without doing him much injustice, we may suppose scarce amenable at all times to the rules of strict etiquette. As a person of some quality, and rather an amateur of letters than a professed author, Drummond probably might be cautious and punctilious, timid in delivering his opinions, and apt to be

[1] Gifford, it will be remembered, wound up by saying, "Enough of Drummond, with whose *friendship* for our author the common sense of the reader will, I trust, no longer be insulted, except from the lips of hopeless idiotism—*longa manantia labra saliva*" (p. cxiv.); and Scott commences by good-naturedly alluding to the *heavy denunciation* under which the attempt has been prohibited.

Digitized by Google

surprised and even shocked at the uncompromising strength of conception and expression natural to Jonson, who had struggled during a long life for the character of intellectual superiority, amid a body of competitors as bold and as zealous, if not as deserving, as himself." (*Misc. Prose Works*, vol. vii. p. 374.)

Another Scotsman, of wide sympathies and a generous mind, has also recently placed on record his views on the same subject. "The summing of Jonson's character," says David Masson, "no doubt reflects Drummond's impressions, and he had a perfect right to put them on paper if he chose; but at the same time it does come a little gratingly in the context of the interchanged letters between the two men; and with all allowance for any temporary discomfort to Drummond as Ben's host, one cannot but see that his fastidious tastes, and his literary predilections, disqualified him for admitting to his liking, as fully as another might have done, such a huge creature as Ben, faults and all." Mr. Masson also thinks that Drummond's national pride was stung when Jonson talked patronizingly of "recent Scottish attempts as not bad for a region so far from the London centre, and recommended a course of Quintilian and English grammar as discipline for something better." These two Scotchmen take, I will venture to say, as severe a view of their countryman's conduct as the circumstances will justify, and explain it in a just and natural manner. It is to be particularly regretted that Gifford did not judge it in a similar spirit.

Of new facts regarding Jonson's career, which have come to light since Gifford wrote, all I think will be found recorded in their proper places in the *Additional Notes* to the various volumes, and need here only be briefly referred to. That he was born at an earlier date than Gifford supposed, there can-

Digitized by Google

not, I imagine, be any doubt. In Edinburgh, on January 19, 1619, Jonson said that he had "told six and forty yeares." Had this been recorded in England, the date would have stood for January 19, 1620, as Gifford calculated it, thereby cutting off one full year; and he likewise chose to regard "*told* six and forty yeares" as meaning that he had turned five and forty, which struck off another. The point is of considerable importance, as it materially widens the space of time which has to include two such leading events in a man's life as his marriage and his serving a campaign, which it is as well should not jostle each other too closely. The various entries of births, deaths, and marriages, raked with great trouble from many mouldering registers, have already been noticed in their proper places. Mr. Collier's discovery of the name of the actor whom Jonson slew, and of the date of the combat, is important in many ways, but principally perhaps as fixing the period at which he ceased to be a Roman Catholic.

Of the minor misadventures in Jonson's career, few rankled so long and so bitterly in his mind, as the rough treatment he received at the hands of the Lord Chamberlain, on his attempting to make his way into Whitehall to see a masque of Daniel's performed in the winter of 1603-4. We learn from an incidental notice in the *Conversations with Drummond* (vol. ix. p. 378) that Sir John Roe was his companion on the occasion, and was the author of a "morall epistle" to him, which began, "That next to playes, the Court and State were the best. God threateneth kings; kings, lords; as lords do us." The verses appear in *Donne's Works* at p. 197 of the 1669 edition, without any hint that they are not his own. What Jonson calls being *ushered out*, Roe, more truly no doubt, describes as being *thrust out*, and the same words, indeed, are used by Jonson himself a quarter

Digitized by Google

of a century afterwards in the *New Inn*, in his favourite disquisition on "True Valour:"—

> "I am kept out a masque, sometime *thrust out*,
> Made wait a day, two, three, for a great word,
> Which when it comes forth is all frown and forehead."

Not many years elapsed before another laureate was handled more roughly still by another Lord Chamberlain, but people expected such things from Philip Herbert, and May got no remedy but soft words. Suffolk also does not appear to have been over gentle in the discharge of his duty, for in the *Irish Masque* (vol. vii. p. 225) Donnell tells the king that 'Toumaish of Shuffolke knoke us o' te payt here, ash we come by;" and Dermock adds, "I fayt tere ish very much phoyt stick here stirring to-night." It is quite possible that Jonson may have had the old affair in his mind when he wrote these words, and if so nobody would enjoy the reference more than King James, who dearly loved allusions to little personal hits.

In 1605 Jonson printed his *Sejanus*, and in the preface took occasion to say—

"Lastly, I would informe you that this booke in all numbers is not the same with that which was acted on the publike stage, wherein a second pen had good share: in place of which I have rather chosen to put weaker (and no doubt less pleasing) of mine own, than to defraud so happy a *genius* of his right, by my lothed usurpation."

The true meaning of this was of course known to every theatre-goer and play-reader of the generation to which it was addressed, but no one, as far as has yet been discovered, thought it worth his while to place the simple fact on record. When a century had gone by and the Shakspeare worship was in its full force, the "Surly Ben" theory seemed to be an essential part of it, and it was at once taken for

Digitized by Google

granted that the second pen was Shakspeare's, that the "loathed usurpation" was a characteristic outburst of Jonson's black and jealous soul; and that the "substitution of the weaker and less pleasing passages of mine own" was simply a device to destroy all remembrance of those which had darkened all around them by their unapproachable brightness. Gifford was the first, or one of the first, to see that this idea had not the shadow of a foundation to rest upon, that both Shakspeare and Jonson must have known that no amount of skill could make their styles of tragedy blend together, and that had such an unnatural conjunction taken place we should have heard of it from other quarters. Gifford thought that since Beaumont's youth put him out of the question, Fletcher, or Middleton at least, must be the man; and Mr. Dyce seemed perfectly convinced that it must be Chapman. In my own humble way, I have ventured to point out that Beaumont was in reality two years older than Gifford supposed, and that in him alone appear to be met the youth, the high birth, and the profession, which are described by Dekker as the attributes of Jonson's constant companion when *Sejanus* was being composed. Nobody had ever dreamed of mentioning a name that was not at least that of a writer of the highest class of the second rank. This has at last been done by Mr. Brinsley Nicholson, a gentleman who has obtained just distinction as a Shakspearean critic and scholar, and who, in the course of his researches, has come upon the following startling stanza in a pamphlet book, published in 1646 by one Samuel Sheppard, entitled *The Times Displayed in Six Sestyads*. "The first five of these sestyads," says Mr. Nicholson, "are against sectaries; the sixth, against the mechanic wits of the day, is so by being a series of verses in praise of the greater and generally older poets, Daniel, Drayton,

Digitized by Google

Shakspeare, Jonson, and others. The eleventh encomium—given as printed—runs thus :—

> "So His that Divine PLAUTUS equalled,
> Whose Commick vain MENANDER nere could hit,
> Whose tragick sceans shal be with wonder Read
> By after ages for unto his wit
> My selfe gave personal aid *I* dictated
> To him when as *Sejanus* fall he writ,
> And yet on earth some foolish sots there bee
> That dare make Randolf his Rival in degree."

Now, it must be admitted that this at first sight is very striking and decisive of the question; but it is only at first sight. Had Samuel Sheppard intended to lay claim to the authorship of the struck-out passages, he would certainly have made some allusion to the fact of their having been eliminated, and defended himself against the supposition of his having loathed Jonson's usurpation of them. All that he really means, as I think, is to boast of his intimacy with Jonson, and of his having been permitted to read "Suetonius" and "Tacitus" aloud while Jonson turned them slowly into English for his *Sejanus*. Intimacy such as this, he considers, enables him to judge of Jonson's merits better, for instance, than the foolish sots who place Randolf on an equality with him. I am not responsible for Mr. Samuel Sheppard's logic. It is no worse after my theory than it is after Mr. Nicholson's. I cannot quit the subject without protesting against the use of such expressions as "insincere flatterings," "mock-modest words," and "hollow phrasing," in speaking of any serious proceeding of Ben Jonson's. Some occasional phrases of empty conventional compliment might possibly be hunted out to justify them, but I have studied his writings as closely as most men, and I cannot recall an instance where insincerity or mock modesty have ever made themselves apparent. His faults indeed are all the other way. [Arrogant

Digitized by Google

self-assertion and defiant contempt of enemies are his never-failing characteristics.

While on the subject of Jonson's disposition and "humours," I may take the opportunity of recording that in the course of some very miscellaneous reading, I came upon a thoroughly well-authenticated anecdote of him, which has never yet been mentioned by any of his biographers. The book I had taken up was *Some Considerations touching the Style of the Holy Scriptures*, by the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq., 4to. 1675; and, in the *Epistle Dedicatory*, I was not a little pleased to read as follows:—"It is not always so despicable a piece of service as may be imagined, to endear by particular considerations an excellent book to a person capable of discovering and making use of the rare things it contains. To which purpose I might offer you diverse more serious instances, but shall only at present (a little to divert you) take this occasion to tell you, that Ben Jonson passionately complaining to a learned acquaintance of mine, that a man of the long robe, whom his wit had raised to great dignities and power, had refused to grant him some very valuable thing he had begged of him, concluded with saying, with an upbraiding tone and gesture to my friend—*Why, the ungrateful wretch knows very well that before he came to preferment I was the man that made him relish Horace!*" Surely this is very characteristic. Boyle's "learned acquaintance" was of course Selden, with whom he is known to have been intimately associated, and the man of the long robe, "whose wit had raised him to great dignities and power," was no doubt Jonson's old ally, Sir John Davies, the Lord Chief Justice. At the nature of the favour it is impossible to guess.

There is yet another pleasing little discovery on which I also stumbled quite accidentally. Who has ever read the *Fortieth Epigram* (vol. viii. p. 164)

Digitized by Google

without longing to know something of Margaret Ratcliffe?—the young, the beautiful, and the witty, who died from grief for the loss of a brother killed in battle, and of whom it could with truth be said that

> "All the gazers on the skies
> Read not in fair heaven's story
> Expresser truth, or truer glory,
> Than they might in her bright eyes."

Gifford curtly says, "Of this lady I can give the reader no information," and I was about sorrowfully to echo the regret when, in turning over the old folios of the Sidney papers, my eye was caught with, "Yesterday did Mrs. Ratcliffe weare a whyte satin gown, all embrodered, richly cutt upon good cloth of silver, that cost £180. But the Fairest doth take pleasure in nothing since the departure of her beloved. Her garments, her countenance, and gestures, witnes no lesse; besides a kynd of unwonted solitarines, which is familiar to her." It is evident from this, and from some previous hints, that Sir Robert Sidney, in spite of his wife and children, had been carrying on a flirtation with the loveliest and wittiest of Elizabeth's maids of honour, for such she turns out to be, and did not dislike to be twitted about it by his humorous and attached correspondent, Rowland Whyte. The fair lady's affections, however, seem to have been fixed on Henry Brooke, the young Lord Cobham, who had just then succeeded to his title, and was regarded as one of the best matches in England. How different a turn might have been given to his career if he had married her? But in August, 1599, the news arrived that Sir Alexander Ratcliffe and many gallant men had been slain in a skirmish in Ireland "by the baseness of the common soldiers." His sister was then confined to her chamber, "being somewhat troubled at my Lady Kildare's unkind using of her, which is thought to proceed from her love to my Lord Cobham. As yet

Digitized by Google

she heares nothing of her brother's death, and, by the queen's command, yt is kept from her, who is determined to break it unto her herself." On the 1st September, Rowland Whyte reports that "Mrs. Ratcliffe keeps her chamber still;" but on the 15th of November all was over, and her successor named. "In Mrs. Ratcliff's place, the faire yong Mrs. Southwell is to be admitted; she is sworen the Queens servant, but not yet in that place." When this nomination was made, the funeral of the predecessor could not have taken place, for the last report is dated the 23d November, 1599, and says, "Mrs. Ratcliffe was buried this day at Westminster; all the maids mourning, but Mrs. Anne Russell was chieffe; she was buried as a nobleman's daughter by the Queen's comand. Many of the nobility were at it, as the Lords Worcester, Sussex, Rutland, Harbert, Gray, Cobham, Lord Thomas; and 24 poore women had gownes, for soe olde it was said she was." Should the above catch the eye of Dean Stanley he will perhaps have it in his power to do something to identify the spot where she is buried, and perhaps to mark it with appropriate lines from Ben Jonson's exquisite epitaph.

There are few points connected with Jonson's career more difficult to understand and to unravel than his various imprisonments and citations before the Council. The records of the country, both public and private, are now undergoing a strict course of examination, and in the proceedings of the Council, and in petitions to private noblemen, we are likely, I think, to clear away a great many of these difficulties. His first imprisonment we may suppose was in the matter of the manslaughter of Gabriel Spencer, and his last citation, in August, 1629, when he was summoned to answer for certain verses on the assassination of Buckingham, which were so exceptionally good that some kind friend suggested they *must*

Digitized by Google

have been written by the veteran laureate. What took place has been so well related by Mr. Forster in his life of Sir John Eliot, that I shall not run the risk of marring it by re-telling. "Ben Jonson was then in the decline of his life and fortune, the munificent rewards of his genius being summed up in the pittance of the laureateship, and it became him to repel a statement that would have struck down his last support. Examined before the Council, he said he had seen the poem at Sir Robert Cotton's house, where he was in the habit of going frequently. It was a house ever open to the cultivators of learning and letters. The verses were lying there on the table after dinner, and others present supposed he had written them. But then it was he first had read, and at once condemned them. At the same time he admitted that the writer was known to him; that he had supped with him lately, and given him a white handled poniard which he ordinarily wore at his own girdle, and to which the other had taken a fancy; and that his name was Townley, a scholar, a divine, and a preacher by profession, and a student of Christ Church. Townley was by this time beyond the clutches of the Court, having fled to the Hague" (vol. ii. p. 365). We may suppose that it was about the time of the gift of the dagger that Townley wrote some complimentary verses, full of good sense and sound appreciation, which are printed at page cclx. of this volume.

I wish we had more information about Jonson's various places of residence. At the time of the above citation he was living in Westminster, close to the Abbey, and before he went to Scotland his abode for a long time had been in the Blackfriars, where his three great comedies were produced. It was known that he did not go back to Blackfriars, but it was only the other day discovered that he had lived after his return, for a time at least, in Cripplegate. The

Digitized by Google

proof of this is contained in the bill of a messenger of the Court which fell into the hands of a gentleman, who communicated it to the *City Press* (January 10, 1874). It runs as follows :—

"Mensis Jenevar anno Regis Jacobi Decimo Septimo, 1619.

Thomas Cooke one of the gromes of the Prince his chamber being sent in his Highnes Service by ye Comand of Mr. Welter Alexander Gentellman Usher Daily Waiter to the Prince his Highnes of two message two severall tymes from the Court at Whithaell in to London by Cripellgatt to warn Mr. Ben Johnson the Poet and the players at the Blackfriers to attend his Highnes that night following at Court wch seavrall services being don he returned each tyme wth answer allso being sent another tyme by the lyke comand to the Honor^abl^ the Lord Hubarde wth Letters wch service being don he returned answer to the Court afore said, for wch services he praieth to have a Lowance for his boot hier and chargis to and fro for thre Jornis to be 4^s^ octed by the honor^abl^ Sr Robart Cary Knight Chamberlin to ye Prince his Highnes and to be paied by the Worshipfull Mr Addam Newton Recever Generall of his Highness Tresuer . . . . . } vj^s^

Every reader of Ben Jonson must have been puzzled by the *Tale of a Tub*, and the mistaken ingenuity which could have selected its simple plot and rustic incidents for the vehicle of a satire on Inigo Jones. Mr. Collier has been kind enough to favour me with a memorandum on the subject, which he drew up so long ago as October 2nd, 1832 :—"It is strange that it seems to have struck nobody, not even his last editor Gifford, that the *Tale of a Tub* must have been one of Ben Jonson's early plays, if not his earliest. He mentions Queen Elizabeth in several places, noticing her predecessor also, but never her successor: thus, in Act i. Sc. 2 [vol. vi. p. 134] he makes *Turfe* ask :

'Does any wight perzent hir majesty's person ?'

On the next page [vol. vi. p. 136] he speaks of

'King Edward our late liege, and sovereign lord.'

Digitized by Google

We may remark besides that its dialogue and construction are very much upon the model of the more ancient form of our drama; note, too, the rhyming versification. Hannibal Puppy thus breaks out in Act iii. Sc. 2 [vol. vi. p. 171]:

> 'Instead of bills, with colstaves come; instead of spears, with spits;
> Your slices serve for slicing swords, to save me and my wits:
> A lady and her woman here, their huisher eke by side,
> (But he stands mute,) have plotted how your Puppy to divide.'

Again in the same scene [vol. vi. p. 174] we have a specimen of the shorter comic measure, though the editors have not perceived it, and print the lines consecutively:—

> 'No, lady gay,
> You shall not zay
> That your Val Puppy
> Was so unlucky
> In speech to fail
> As to name a tail,
> Be as be may be,
> Before a lady.'

"The allusions are all old, and John Heywood, the dramatist of the reign of Henry VIII., is mentioned by name with the battle of St. Quintin's [vol. vi. p. 182], which happened in 1557, an old character asserting that he had then been a captain. Skelton, with his *Elinor Rumming*, is also spoken of [vol. vi, p. 217], with Tom Tiler [p. 134] and other matters, which would have been quite out of date if, as Gifford tells us, the *Tale of a Tub* had been 'the last piece which Jonson brought on the stage.' These points may serve to show that the comedy was in fact written many years before it was acted in 1633, and more than forty years before it was printed in the folio of 1640, posterior to the death of the poet. I may be very wrong, but the hint is perhaps worth

Digitized by Google

following up by any new editor. We meet, in the play, with no notices of James I. or his son, though allusions to them might easily and appropriately have been introduced.—J. P. C."

A hint once given, the following up was an easy matter, and a careful study of the comedy, with this particular point of date in view, has left no doubt in my mind that Mr. Collier is incontestably right in his opinion that the *Tale of a Tub*, instead of being the latest, is one of the earliest of Jonson's works. Artifice of composition, such as is carried to so great a height in Thackeray's *Esmond*, for instance, was, I conceive, altogether unthought-of by the Elizabethan dramatists, who, as Gifford remarks of Jonson, "usually bring up their action as closely as possible to the period of writing" (vol. iii. p. 334, note). In a play of ordinary every-day life, the scene of which was laid in the familiar fields of Tottenham Court, Kilburn, and St. Pancras, the very last thing which was likely to enter the writer's head would have been a systematic study to give his work the appearance of having been written some forty years beforehand. In 1633, when this play of Jonson's was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain, what Dean Stanley describes as the "majestic initials" E. R. had been inscribed on the Great Queen's coffin for full thirty years, an ample time to ensure the vanishing of all peculiar feminine nomenclature attached to places and offices. As Mr. Albery or Mr. Robertson would not, in the 33 *Victoria*, talk of the *King's* Beefeaters, or the *King's* Bench, so I take it a comic writer of the 9th King Charles the First would not have spoken of the "*Queen's dominions*," or arrested a man in "Her Majesty's name." It is idle to multiply the instances, more especially as most of them have been pointed out in their proper places in the Notes, and it is more to the purpose to say that in my *now* opinion there is a boyish rollicking spirit

Digitized by Google

pervading the whole composition, a characteristic which was perceived by Gifford, who accounted for it by assuming that the piece was written "to relieve the tedium of a long disease." But long diseases are not relieved in this way, as Gifford might have known from his own experience, and as many of his "Quarterly" victims knew to their cost. Is it not likely, then, that this was one of his earliest pieces, which had lain forgotten in one of the old theatres; that it had been submitted to a manager, and rejected or kept back as hardly suited to representation; that in the meantime Jonson became a husband, a father, and a soldier, and in fighting the battle of life, literally as well as metaphorically, made the acquaintance of characters and humours which, by their stronger markings and more developed idiosyncracies, were better suited for the stage of our ancestors, and better adapted to display his own peculiar powers, than the simpler foolings of Kilburn and Totten Hall? Ball Puppy, To Pan, and Co. having thus made way for the Bobadils, Kiteleys, Puntarvolos, Volpones, Moscas, Subtles, and Faces, whom he depicted with so high a hand, the early piece lay neglected and perhaps forgotten, until, in old age and sickness, when the faculty of invention was numbed, he bethought him of this juvenile performance as being capable of conversion into a weapon of ridicule against his old friend and enemy, Inigo Jones. In the very same way, more than a century afterwards, another great original genius, being offended by a popular favourite, bethought himself likewise of a cheap and easy mode of revenge. "Having an old plate by me," says Hogarth, "with some parts ready, such as the background and a dog, I began to consider how I could turn so much work laid aside to some account, so patched up a print of Master Churchill in the character of a bear. The pleasure and pecuniary advantage which I derived from these two engravings,

Digitized by Google

together with occasionally riding on horseback, restored me to as much health as can be expected at my time of life." The two cases seem precisely analogous.

Jonson never seemed well satisfied with the City of London, and never missed an opportunity of girding at the citizens. He had no such cause to be dissatisfied with Edinburgh. Mr. David Laing has been kind enough to send me some Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, containing Extracts from the Treasurer's Account of the City of Edinburgh, from which it appears that they not only elected him a Burgess and Guild brother, and that his Burgess-ticket was drawn up with "writhing and gilting" more than usually ornamental, but that they entertained him at a grand public banquet on some day in November, 1618. In submitting the extracts to the Society, Mr. Laing observes, "What might we not have given had there been present an 'Illustrated News' and 'Times' reporter to have preserved the speeches, and represented the persons assembled at this festive banquet! But printed newspapers were not then in existence. I wonder, however, that some of our artists should not have thought of the words of Collins' ode,

> 'Then will I dress once more the faded bower
> Where Jonson sat in Drummond's classic shade;'

or have represented him at the Cross, accompanied by the Provost and his brother burgesses." The affair is so honourable to all concerned, that it is only right to give the extracts at full length. After making the abatement for the pounds being Caledonian, the expenditure is still creditable to the famous old city,

> "The heart of Scotland, Britain's other eye."

Digitized by Google

"COUNCIL REGISTER.

Precept Gild Jonsoun burges and gildbrother. Vigesimo quinto Septembris J^m^ vj^c^ decimo octavo. Ordanis the Deyne of Gild to mak Benjamyn Jonsoun inglisman burges and gildbrother in communi forma.

Precept Ainslie Thesaurer. Decimo sexto Octobris J^m^ vj^c^ decimo octavo. Ordanis the Thesaurer to pay to James Ainslie late Baillie twa hundreth tuentie ane pund, sex schillinges four pennyis debursit be him upon the denner maid to Benjamin Jonstoun conforme to the Act maid thairanent, and compt given in of the same."

The entry in the Treasurer's accounts is as follows :

"Item their aucht to be allowed to the compter payit be him to James Ainslie baillie for expenses debursit upon ane bancquett maid to Benjamin Johnstoune conforme to ane act of Counsell of the dait the day of November 1618. ij^c^ xxj lib vj^s^ viij^d^. (£221 6. 8.)"

From the Dean of Guild's accounts :

"Item the twentie day of Januar. J^m^ vj^c^ and nyntene ȝeiris geivin at directionn of the Counsell to Alexander Patersone for wrytting and gilting of Benjamine Johnestounes burges ticket being thryes written. xiij lib vj*s.* viij*d.*"

But I must now hasten on, and passing over Gifford's extraordinary misreading of the letter at p. cxxxviii. and p. 168, do no more than remark that Jonson's death, by a bewildering shifting from Old to New Style, is represented as having taken place on the 6th of August, instead of Thursday the 17th of August, 1637. In my boyhood I was familiar with the Abbey, and well remember the "pavement square of blew marble, 14 inches square, with O RARE BEN IOHNSON," which marked the poet's grave. When Buckland was Dean, the spot had to be disturbed for the coffin of Sir Robert Wilson, and the Dean sent his son Frank, now so well known as an agreeable writer on Natural History, to see whether he could observe anything to confirm, or otherwise, the tradition about Jonson

Digitized by Google

being buried in a standing posture. The workmen, he tells us, "found a coffin very much decayed, which from the appearance of the remains must have originally been placed in the upright position. The skull found among these remains, Spice, the gravedigger, gave me as that of Ben Jonson, and I took it at once into the Dean's study. We examined it together, and then going into the Abbey carefully returned it to the earth." In 1859, when John Hunter's coffin was removed to the Abbey, the same spot had to be dug up, and Mr. Frank Buckland again secured the skull of Jonson, placing it at the last moment on the coffin of the great surgeon. So far, so good; but not long afterwards, a statement appeared in the "Times" that the skull of Ben Jonson was in the possession of a blind gentleman at Stratford-upon-Avon. Hereupon Mr. Buckland made further inquiries, and calmly tells us that he has convinced himself that the skull which he had taken such care of on two occasions, was not Jonson's skull at all; that a Mr. Ryde had anticipated him both times in removing and replacing the genuine article, and that the Warwickshire claimant was a third skull which Mr. Ryde observed had been purloined from the grave on the second opening. Mr. Buckland is a scientific naturalist, and an ardent worshipper of the closest of all observers, John Hunter. Now mark what satisfies such a man on such an occasion as this. He was wrong and Mr. Ryde was right, because Mr. Ryde described *his* skull as having *red hair;* and in Aubrey's *Lives of Eminent Men*,[1] "I find evidence quite sufficient for

[1] It is as well to mention that Aubrey likewise mentions a fact about Jonson's eyes which may also probably bear upon the colour of his hair. It will be seen that the old gossip's deduction takes a different direction: "Ben Jonson had one eye lower than the other, and bigger, like Clun the player. Perhaps he begott Clunn." *Lives*, ii. p. 415.

Digitized by Google

any medical man to come to the conclusion that Ben Jonson's hair was in all probability of a red colour, though the fact *is not stated in so many words.*" In so many words! I think not! Actually all that Aubrey says on the subject is, "*He was, or rather had been, of a cleare and faire skin*"! (*Lives*, ii. 414.) And this, too, in spite of our knowing from his own pen, and from more than one painting, that his hair was as black as the raven's wing! Besides, he was sixty-five years old when he died, and we may be sure that the few locks he had left were neither red nor black, but of the hue of the "hundred of grey hairs" which he described as remaining eighteen years before. Mr. Buckland's statement will be found at great length in the *Fourth Series* of his *Curiosities of Natural History*, one of the most entertaining little volumes with which we are acquainted.

FRANCIS CUNNINGHAM.

December 1st, 1874.

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS OF BEN JONSON.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS OF BEN JONSON.

TO write the Life of Jonson as it has been usually written, would be neither a very long nor a very difficult task; since I should have only to [transcribe from former biographers the vague accounts which each, in succession, has taken from his predecessor; and to season the whole with the captious and splenetic insinuations of the critics, and commentators on our dramatic poetry.] A due respect for the public seemed to require something more. It was fully time to examine into the authenticity of the charges incessantly urged against this eminent man; and this has been, at least, attempted. The result has not accorded with the general persuasion concerning him. The reader, therefore, who has the courage to follow me through these pages, must be prepared to see many of his prejudices overthrown, to hear that he has been imposed upon by the grossest fabrications, and, (however mortifying the discovery may prove,) that many of those who have practised on his integrity and surprised his judgment, are weak at once and worthless, with few pretensions to talents, and none to honesty.

Benjamin or (as the name is usually abbreviated

Digitized by Google

by himself), Ben Jonson,[1] was born in the early part of the year 1574.[2] His grandfather was a man of some family and fortune, originally settled at Annandale, in Scotland, from which place he removed to Carlisle, and was subsequently taken into the service of Henry VIII. His father, who was probably

[1] JONSON.] The attacks on our author begin at a pretty early period. He knew his own name, it seems, and persisted in writing it correctly, though "some of his best friends" misspelt it! This is produced, in the "*Biographia Britannica*," as "an instance of that *affectation* which so strongly marks the poet's character." But this perseverance in the right was a family failing, for his mother (as it appears), wrote it in the same manner. His "singularity" in this respect, (these writers think,) "would have been discovered, had he been more communicative—but it is observable, that though his descent was very far from being a discredit to him, yet we *never find him once* mentioning his family upon any occasion." From critics so disposed, Jonson must have had unusual good fortune to escape with justice. The fact, however, is that he is *once* found mentioning his family. He talked of it to Drummond, and had it pleased that worthy gentleman to be less sparing of his malice, and somewhat more liberal of his information, we might have obtained enough on this head, to satisfy the most ardent curiosity.

[2] *The year* 1574.] The writers of the *Bio. Brit.* are somewhat embarrassed here, by a line in the Poem *left in Scotland*, in which Jonson says that he had then

"Told seven and forty years."

Now, this, say they, as the poet was there in 1619, fixes his birth to the year 1572, and makes him two years older than is commonly supposed. But these critics should have looked into Drummond, instead of reasoning upon a fact which is not to be found there. In Drummond the line stands,

"Told *six and forty* years;"

and the date subjoined is January 1619-20. Jonson was then in his forty-sixth year: in short, there seems no plea for questioning the received opinion. The second folio is of various dates, and of little authority. That Jonson was born on the eleventh of June, which is also affirmed by those writers, is taken on the credit of another blunder in this volume, where, in the verses on sir Kenelm Digby, "*my* birth day," is printed for "*his* birth day," &c. In the 12mo. edit. 1640, both the lines stand as here given.

Digitized by Google

about the court, suffered a long imprisonment under queen Mary, and was finally deprived of his estate.[3] If religion was the cause, as is universally supposed, persecution only served to increase his zeal; for he entered, some time afterwards, into holy orders, and became, as Antony Wood informs us, "a grave minister of the gospel."

Jonson was a posthumous child, and "made his first entry (the Oxford Antiquary says,) on the stage of this vain world, about a month after his father's death, within the city of Westminster." Fuller observes, that though he could not, with all his inquiry, find him in his cradle, he could fetch him from his *long coats*. It would seem from this, that the residence of his father was unknown. Mr. Malone supposes, and on very good grounds,[4] that his

[3] This is our author's own account; it is therefore worse than folly to repeat from book to book, after Aubrey, that "Ben Jonson was a Warwickshire man." Mr. Malone says, that "a collection of poems by Ben Jonson, jun. (the son of our author) was published in 1672, with some lines addressed to all the ancient family of the Lucys, in which the writer describes himself as a 'little stream from their clear spring;' a fact (continues he) which adds support to Dr. Bathurst's account" (the impossible story just quoted from Aubrey) "of his father's birth place." *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 311.* This is a strange passage. Young Jonson died before his father, in 1635, and the collection of which Mr. Malone speaks, contains several pieces written after the Restoration. The very first poem in the book is addressed *by the author* to John, earl of Rutland, and his son, lord Roos, who was not born till both young Jonson and his father were dead! Had Mr. Malone even looked at the title page of this little volume, he must have seen that the name of Ben Jonson, Jun. was a mere catch-word; for the poems are there expressly said to be "composed by W. S. gent."

[4] *On very good grounds.*] "I found, in the Register of St. Martin's, that a Mrs. Margaret Jonson was married in November 1575, to Mr. Thomas Fowler." MALONE. *Shak.* vol. i. p. 622. There

* The edition of Shakspeare referred to here, and elsewhere, is uniformly that in fifteen vol. 8vo. published in MDCCXCIII.

Digitized by Google

mother married again in somewhat less than two years after the death of her first husband, and it was at this period, perhaps, that Fuller's researches found him, "a little child, in Hartshorn Lane, near Charing Cross."

His father-in-law was a master-bricklayer by profession; and there is no cause for believing, that he was either unable or unwilling to bestow on his new charge such a portion of education as then commonly fell to the children of respectable craftsmen; and Jonson was accordingly sent, when of a proper age, to a private school in the church of St. Martin in the Fields.

From this school it was natural to suppose that he would be taken to follow the occupation of his step-father; but this was not the case. Respect for the memory of Mr. Jonson, or what is equally probable, a remarkable aptitude in the child for learning, raised him up a friend, who sent him, at his own expense, to Westminster School. Camden, a name dear to literature, was then the second master of this celebrated establishment; young Jonson naturally fell under his care, and he was not slow in discovering, nor negligent in cultivating, the extraordinary talents of his pupil.

No record enables us to state how long he continued with this great man. Mr. Malone supposes that he was taken from him, when he had reached his thirteenth year; but "lord Winton" (G. Morley, bishop of Winchester, who, as Izaac Walton tells us, knew Ben Jonson very well), "says he was in the sixth, i. e. the uppermost form in the school,"[5] when

cannot, I think, be a reasonable doubt on the person here named: unquestionably she was the poet's mother.

[5] *Letters by Eminent Persons*, &c. 1813. vol. iii. p. 416. There is yet a difficulty. Grant was head master from 1572 to 1593, so that if Jonson was in the sixth form, and if the business of the school

Digitized by Google

he was removed; and he could scarcely have attained this situation, as schools were then constituted, at thirteen.

Jonson, who had a warm and affectionate heart, and ever retained an extraordinary degree of respect for his old master, thus addresses him in his epigrams:—

> "Camden, most reverend head, to whom I owe
> All that I am in arts, and all I know—"

and in the dedication of *Every Man in his Humour*, he tell his "most learned and honoured friend," that he "is not one of those who can suffer the benefit conferred upon his youth to perish with his age;" and he adds that, in accepting the comedy, he will find no occasion to repent of having been his instructor. All this appears to argue greater maturity, and deeper studies than are usually allowed; and I should therefore incline to refer the period of his leaving Westminster to his sixteenth year.

From school Jonson seems to have gone, at once, to the University. The person who had hitherto befriended him, and whose name is unfortunately lost, gave a farther proof of kindness, on this occasion, and, if we may trust Aubrey, procured him an Exhibition at Cambridge, where, according to Fuller, "he was statutably admitted into St. John's College."[6] No note of his matriculation is to be found. By some accident there is an omission of names in the University Register, from June 1589 (when

was conducted then as it is at present (which, however, does not appear,) he must have been under him; yet of Grant he says nothing. It is probable that Camden, who had a great affection for our author, continued to assist his studies.

[6] Aubrey says "Trinity College;" and indeed if Jonson had been on the foundation at Westminster, and went, regularly, to Cambridge, this must have been the college: but his name does not appear among the candidates.

Digitized by Google

Jonson was in his sixteenth year), to June, 1602; this may serve to corroborate the opinion given above, that the period fixed upon by Mr. Malone for our author's removal to the University is somewhat too early.

The Exhibition, whatever might be its value, was found inadequate to his support; and, as his parents were evidently unable to assist him, Jonson was compelled to relinquish his situation at Cambridge, and return to the house of his father.[7] How long he continued at college cannot be known. Fuller says "a few weeks;" it was more probably many months: he had unquestionably a longer connection with Cambridge, than is usually supposed; and he speaks of his obligations to the members of that University in terms which cannot be justified by a slight acquaintance.

On returning to his parents, he was immediately taken into the business of his father-in-law. These good people have not been kindly treated. Wood terms the mother a silly woman; and the father is perpetually reflected on for calling his son home, to work at his own profession. The mother, however, was not "silly;" on the contrary, she was a high-spirited woman, fully sensible of the rank of her first husband, in life, and of the extraordinary merits of her son: but she was not, apparently, in circumstances to maintain him without labour; and as his father-in-law had readily acquiesced, for many years, in a mode of his education, which must have occasioned some expense, there seems little cause for the ill humour with which the mention of their names is sure to be accompanied.

Jonson, however, who, both from birth and educa-

[7] In how many circumstances may not a resemblance be traced between Jonson and his great namesake!

Digitized by Google

tion, had probably been encouraged to look to the Church for an establishment, was exceedingly mortified at this new destination. That he worked with a trowel in one hand, and a Horace or a Homer in the other; that he was admired, pitied, and relieved by Sutton, as Chetwood says, or by Camden, as others say,[8] and sent back to his studies, are figments

[8] Fuller tells us that "some gentlemen, pitying that his parts should be buried under the rubbish of so mean a calling, did by their bounty manumise him freely to follow his own ingenious inclinations." *Worthies of England*, vol. ii. p. 112. This, however, is no better founded than the rest. Another story is told by Wood, (probably, on Aubrey's authority) that Jonson was taken from his father's business to accompany young Raleigh in his travels. Young Raleigh was at this time unborn—at any rate, he was "mewling and puking in his nurse's arms:" this however, signifies nothing—the story is too good to be lost, as it tends to degrade Jonson, and it is therefore served up in every account of his life. "Mr. Camden recommended him to sir W. Raleigh, who intrusted him with the education of his eldest son, a gay spark, who could not brook Ben's rigorous treatment; but perceiving one foible in his disposition, made use of that to throw off the yoke of his government; and that was an unlucky habit Ben had contracted, through his love of jovial company, of being overtaken with liquor, which sir Walter did of all vices most abominate."—And yet sir Walter, who undoubtedly knew Jonson as well as his son, trusted this habitual drunkard with his education! and yet Camden, who never lost sight of him from his youth, recommended him!—"One day, when Ben had taken a plentiful dose, and was fallen into a profound sleep, young Raleigh got a great basket, and a couple of men who laid Ben in it, and then with a pole carried him between their shoulders to sir Walter, telling him their young master had sent home his tutor." *Oldys's MS. notes to Langbaine.* This absurd tale, which is merely calculated for the meridian of Mr. Joseph Miller, Mr. Malone quotes at full as an irrefragable proof that "Jonson was, at some period, tutor to this hopeful youth."

As young Raleigh was not born till 1595, Jonson could not well be tutor to him in 1593, the period usually assigned. In 1603, when the child had barely attained his eighth year, sir Walter was committed close prisoner to the Tower, where he remained under sentence of death, till March, 1615, a few months before he sailed for Guiana. Of this the story-teller was probably ignorant; and he therefore talks as familiarly of Raleigh's *home*,

Digitized by Google

pleasing enough to merit to be believed; but, unfortunately, they have no foundation in truth. Neither friend nor admirer followed him to his humble employment; and he certainly experienced, at this time, no tokens of kindness.—His own account is, "that he could not endure the occupation of a bricklayer;" and, as his aversion increased, he made one desperate effort to escape from it altogether, not by returning to Cambridge, but by withdrawing to the continent, and entering, as a volunteer, into the army then employed in Flanders. Such is the simple narrative of Jonson's life till he arrived at the age of eighteen. It is chiefly extracted from his own conversations, and has the merit of being at once probable and consistent.

How long our author had continued with his father-in-law, is no where mentioned. It could not be a twelvemonth (though Mr. Malone strangely supposes it to have been five years;[9]) but it was yet long enough to furnish a theme for illiberal sarcasm

as if he had been always living at large. The "shouldering" of Jonson, in a basket, through the streets of London, the triumphant entrance of the "porters" (with a train of boys at their heels) into the Tower, then guarded with the most jealous vigilance, and the facility with which they penetrate into the interior apartments, and lay their precious burden at the feet of the state prisoner—all these, and a hundred other improbabilities, awaken no suspicion in the commentators, nor, as far as I can find, in the reader!

Mr. A. Chalmers (*General Biography*) rejects Wood's account; yet he adds—"*So many* of Jonson's contemporaries have mentioned his connection with the Raleigh family, that it is probable he was in some shape befriended by them." *Not one* of Jonson's contemporaries has a syllable on the subject! In fact, Jonson never much admired the moral character of sir Walter Raleigh: his talents, indeed, he held in great respect, and he was well able to appreciate them, for he was personally acquainted with sir Walter, and assisted him in writing his *History of the World;* he also wrote some good lines explanatory of the grave frontispiece to that celebrated work.

[9] From 1588 to 1593. *Shak.* vol. i. p. 624.

Digitized by Google

while he lived. "Let not those blush," says the worthy Fuller, "that have, but those that have not, a lawful calling;" a piece of advice which was wholly lost upon the poet's contemporaries, who recur perpetually to what Mr. A. Chalmers calls his "degrading occupation." Decker and others, who were, at the very moment, pledging their future labours for the magnificent loan of "five shillings," or writing "penny books" in spunging-houses, are high in mirth, at the expense of the "bricklayer," and ring the changes on the "hod and trowel," the "lime and mortar poet," very successfully, and, apparently, very much to their own satisfaction.

Jonson's stay in the Low Countries did not extend much beyond one campaign: he had, however, an opportunity of signalizing his courage; having, as he told Drummond, encountered and killed an enemy (whose spoils he carried off), in the sight of both armies. This achievement is undoubtedly dwelt upon with too much complacency by the writers of the *Bio. Brit.* for which they are properly checked by Mr. A. Chalmers, who is not, himself, altogether free from blame. "One man's killing and stripping another (he says) is a degree of military prowess of no very extraordinary kind." Mr. Chalmers does not see that this was not a general action, in which, as he justly observes, such circumstances are sufficiently common; but a single combat, decided in the presence of both armies. In those days, when great battles were rarely fought, and armies lay for half a campaign in sight of each other, it was not unusual for champions to advance into the midst, and challenge their adversaries. In a bravado of this nature, Jonson fought and conquered; and though we may question the wisdom of the exploit, we may surely venture, without much violation of candour, to admit its gallantry. Jonson himself always talked with

Digitized by Google

complacency of his military career. He loved, he says, the profession of arms; and he boldly affirms, in an appeal to "the true soldier," that while he followed it, he "did not shame it by his actions."[1]

Jonson brought little from Flanders, (whence he was probably induced to return by the death of his father,) but the reputation of a brave man, a smattering of Dutch, and an empty purse. Nothing, in fact, could be more hopeless than his situation. In the occupation of a bricklayer, he had evidently attained no skill; at all events, having already sacrificed so much to his aversion for it, he was not likely to recur to it a second time, and he had no visible means of subsistence. His biographers say, that he now went to Cambridge; but without money, this was not in his power; and, indeed, the circumstance appears altogether improbable. His father-in-law might, perhaps, be no more; but his mother was still alive, and in London, and in her house he appears to have taken up his abode. He was not of a humour, however, to profit, in long inactivity, of her scanty resources, and he therefore adopted the resolution of turning his education to what account he could, and, like most of the poets, his contemporaries, seeking a subsistence from the stage. He was now about nineteen.

"Jonson began his theatrical career," Mr. Malone says, and he is followed by all who have since written on the subject, "as a strolling player, and after having rambled for some time by a play-

[1] It is not improbable that these daring feats were encouraged by the English general. Stanley had delivered up a fort, which disgraced, as well as dispirited the army: and Vere, who now commanded, made extraordinary efforts of gallantry to revive the ancient ardour. He stormed Daventer, and seemed to court danger. In 1591-2, large reinforcements were sent to Ostend, then held by an English garrison, and with these I doubt not Jonson went.

Digitized by Google

waggon in the country, repaired to London, and endeavoured, at the Curtain, to obtain a livelihood among the actors, till, not being able to set a *good face upon't*, he could not get a service among the mimics." Although Mr. Malone gives this, and much more, from the *Satiromastix*, as if he really believed it, yet nothing is so questionable. What Decker means by "not setting a good face upon't," is easily understood:[2] Jonson was of a scorbutic habit, and his face might be affected with it at the period of Decker's writing; but it had not been always so, and Aubrey expressly mentions that he was in his youth "of a clear and fair skin:" nor is it easy to be believed that he could not get a service among the wretched mimics in the skirts of the town. "I never," says the duchess of Newcastle, whom Mr. Malone (upon another occasion indeed,) allows to be a good judge, "I never heard any man read well but my husband; and I have heard him say, he never heard any man read well but Ben Jonson; and yet he hath heard many in his time."[3] With the advantages, therefore, of youth, person, voice, and somewhat more of literature than commonly fell to the share of every obscure actor in a strolling com-

[2] It would be ridiculous to adopt this clumsy piece of wit, and argue from it that Jonson was a bad actor. Capell, who also quotes the passage, says, "This is meant of Jonson's *ugliness*, which is frequently played upon in this satire." *School of Shakspeare*, vol. iii. p. 232. That Jonson was *ugly* is the dream of Capell: his features were good. Decker adds, that he had "a *very bad face* for a soldier." Now he certainly did not play this part amiss. His courage was never doubted:—but the quotation may serve to shew the absurdity of founding positive charges upon such vague expressions. To do the commentators justice, they were ignorant of the existence of this last passage; for they never examine their way, but boldly and blindly follow one another.

[3] His house was open to every man of genius and learning for more than half a century. *Letters of the duchess of Newcastle*, fol. 1664, p. 362.

Digitized by Google

pany, Jonson could scarcely fail to get a service among the mimics, notwithstanding the grave authority of captain Tucca.[4] That our author ever ambled by the side of a waggon, and *took mad Jeronymo's part*, though Mr. Malone repeats it with full conviction,[5] is also very questionable, or rather false altogether. It cannot have failed to strike every one who has read this production of Kyd, (among whom I do not reckon Mr. Malone,) that the author trusted for a great part of the effect of his tragedy, to the contrast between the diminutive size of the marshal (Jeronymo) and the strutting of his language and action:

"I'll not be long away,
Short is my body, short shall be my stay."
"My mind's a *giant*, though my *bulk be small*."
"I have need to *wax*
Or else my enemies will stride over me."

He is thus addressed by Balthazar:

"Thou *inch* of Spain,
Thou man, from thy hose downward, scarce so much:
Thou very little larger than thy beard,
Speak not such big words, they will throw thee down,
Little Jeronymo, words bigger than thyself!"

And he signs himself "*little* Jeronymo, marshal." In a word, so many allusions of the most direct kind, are made to this circumstance in every part of the

[4] Tucca is the creation of Jonson. He is described as a general railer, a man whose whole conversation is made up of scurrilous exaggerations and impossible falsehoods: yet he is the sole authority for this part of Jonson's life. The captain says in another place. "When thou rann'st mad for the death of Horatio, thou borrowd'st a gown of Roscius, the stager, and sent'st it home lowsy;" upon which the editor (Hawkins) wisely remarks—"Ben Jonson played the part of Jeronymo, as appears from this passage."

[5] "The first observation which I shall make on Aubrey's account is, that the latter part of it, which informs us that Ben Jonson

Digitized by Google

play, that no tall or bulky figure could attempt the character without devoting it to utter ridicule. The fact is, that Jonson was employed by the manager to "write adycions" for this popular drama; and that was sufficient for Decker's purpose.

Wood rejects the story of his ambling after a waggon, and tells us that upon his return from Cambridge (where he assuredly had not then been,) "he did recede to a nursery or obscure play-house, called the Green Curtain;[6] but that his first action and writing there were both ill." Wood's authority, unfortunately, is of little weight in this case, being wholly derived from a vague report picked up by Aubrey from one John Greenhill. It is not too lightly to be credited that Jonson should be singled out for his incapacity amongst the unfledged nestlings of the "Green Curtain in Shoreditch."—But the matter is of little moment; since wherever he acted or wherever he wrote, his labours were abruptly terminated by an event of a very serious nature, which took place almost immediately after his return from Flanders. It appears that he had some kind of dispute with a person whose rank or condition in life is not known, but who is commonly supposed to be a player.[7] In consequence of this he was called out,

was a bad actor," (*not a good one*, is Aubrey's expression), is *incontestibly confirmed* by Decker," (in the passage just quoted). *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 322. It seems to have escaped Mr. Malone, that to repeat a story after another, is not to *confirm* it. Aubrey merely copies Decker.

[6] Oldys, in his MS. notes to Langbaine, says that Jonson was himself the master of a play-house in the Barbican.

He adds, that the poet speaks of his theatre; and Mr. A. Chalmers repeats from this idle authority, that "in his writings mention is made of *his theatre!*" So the blind lead the blind! Jonson's *theatre* is his book of Epigrams. See vol. viii. p. 144.

[7] I know of no authority for this but captain Tucca. "Art not famous enough yet, my mad Harostratus, for killing a *player*, but thou must eat men alive?" *Satiromastix.*

Digitized by Google

or, as he says, "appealed, to a duel." He was not of a humour to decline the invitation. They met, and he killed his antagonist,[8] who seems to have acted with little honour; having brought to the field, as our author told Drummond, a sword ten inches longer than his own. His victory, however, left him little cause for exultation: he was severely wounded in the arm, thrown into prison for murder, and, as he says himself, "brought near the gallows."

Here he was visited by a popish priest, who took advantage of the unsettled state of his religious opinions, to subvert his mind, and induce him to renounce the faith in which he had been bred, for the errors of the Romish Church. This has been attributed by some to his fears. "His tough spirit," say the authors of his life, in the *Bio. Brit.* "sunk into some degree of melancholy, so that he became a fit object to be subdued by the crafty attacks of a Popish priest." Others, following the opinion of Drummond, attribute the change to an indifference about all religions. It is probable, that neither was the cause. Such conversions were among the daily occurrences of the time; even among those who had more years than Jonson, and far more skill in controversy than he could possibly have. His own account of the matter is very concise: he took, he says, the priest's word: he did not however always

[8] "He killed," Aubrey says, "Mr. Marlow the poet, on Bunhill, coming from the Green Curtain play-house." Mr. Marlow, the poet, whose memory Jonson held in high estimation, was killed at least two years before this period, in a brothel squabble: —but whoever expects a rational account of any fact, however trite, from Aubrey, will meet with disappointment. Had any one told this "maggoty-pated" man that Jonson had killed "Mr. Shakspeare the poet," he would have received the tale with equal facility, and recorded it with as little doubt of its truth. In short, Aubrey thought little, believed much, and confused every thing.

Digitized by Google

continue in this state of ignorance; and it is to his praise that, at a more mature age, he endeavoured to understand the ground of his belief, and diligently studied the fathers, and *those wiser guides* who preached the words of truth in simplicity.[9]

While he was in prison, there were (as he told Drummond) spies set to catch him; but he was put upon his guard by the gaoler, to whose friendly warning he probably owed his life; as he was the most incautious of men in his conversation. These spies could have nothing to do with the cause of his imprisonment, and must therefore have been employed about him solely on account of his connection with the Popish priest. The years 1593 and 1594 were years of singular disquietude and alarm. The catholics, who despaired of effecting any thing against the queen by open force, engaged in petty conspiracies to take her off by sudden violence. The nation was agitated by these plots, which were multiplied by fear; and several seminaries, as the popish priests educated abroad were then called, were actually convicted of attempts to poison the queen, and executed. Jonson revenged himself for the insidious attacks made on his life, by an epigram which he afterwards printed, and which is not one of his best:

> "Spies, you are lights in state, but of base stuff,
> Who, when you've burnt yourselves down to the snuff,
> Stink, and are thrown aside:—End fair enough!"

It is not known to what, or whom, Jonson finally owed his deliverance from prison. Circumstances

[9] I know not why Jonson should be reproached for this change, as he frequently is: far from arguing a total carelessness, as they say, it would seem rather a proof of the return of a serious mind. The great and good Jeremy Taylor was a convert to popery for a short time; so was Chillingworth, and so were a thousand more of the same description. In fact, young men (and Jonson was at

Digitized by Google

were undoubtedly in his favour, for he had received a challenge, and he had been unfairly opposed in the field: as criminal causes were then conducted, these considerations might not, however, have been sufficient to save him. The prosecution was probably dropt by his enemies.

On his release, he naturally returned to his former pursuits, unpromising as they are represented to be. With that happy mode of extricating himself from a part of his difficulties which men of genius sometimes adopt, he now appears to have taken a wife.[1] She was young, and a catholic like himself; in no respect, indeed, does his choice seem to have discredited his judgment; which is more, perhaps, than can fairly be said for his partner: but she was a woman of domestic habits, and content, perhaps, to struggle with poverty, for the sake of her children. She was dead when Jonson visited Scotland in 1618, and in the costive and splenetic abridgment of his conversations with Drummond, she is shortly mentioned as having been shrewish, but honest (i. e. faithfully attached) to her husband.

But what were the pursuits by which Jonson had

this time a very young man) of a serious way of thinking, of warm imaginations, and of ill-digested studies, are not among the most unfavourable subjects for proselytism.

[1] Jonson was now in his 20th year. I have followed the writers of the *Bio. Brit.* who suppose that his first child was a daughter. In the beautiful Epitaph on her, beginning,

> "Here lies, to each her parent's ruth,
> Mary, the daughter of their youth:"—

she is said, by the poet, to be "his first daughter;" she might not, however, have been his first child: yet, I believe, from other circumstances, that the biographers are correct. In this case, Jonson's marriage must have taken place, at latest, in 1594, as we know that he had a son born in 1596. This date is the first of which we can speak decidedly; it is therefore of some moment in our author's life. From 1596 the years are sufficiently marked: antecedently to this period some latitude must be allowed.

Digitized by Google

hitherto been enabled to procure a precarious subsistence?—assuredly not ambling by a waggon, nor "acting and writing ill" at the Green Curtain. The fortunate preservation of Mr. Henslowe's memorandums, amidst the wreck of so much valuable matter through the sloth and ignorance of the members of Dulwich College, has given a sort of precision to this period of dramatic history, which no one was sanguine enough to expect. From the extracts made by Mr. Malone, and introduced into his excellent History of the English Stage, we are enabled to trace the early part of Jonson's dramatic career with some degree of accuracy; and we find him, as might be expected, following the example of contemporary poets, and writing in conjunction with those who were already in possession of the stage: a practice encouraged by the managers, whose chance of loss it diminished.[2]

The notices which Mr. Malone has copied from the MS. respecting the dramatic writers, begin with 1597; but he has given a curious account of the pieces performed by Mr. Henslowe's companies, which commences at an earlier period. As we know not the titles of Jonson's first dramas, it is not possible to discover whether any of those mentioned previously to 1596, belong to him. *Every Man in his Humour* is the first piece in the list which we can appropriate; and this was then a popular play; having been acted, as Mr. Henslowe says, eleven times between the 25th of November 1596 and the 10th of May in the succeeding year. Before this period, however, he must have written for the stage both alone and with others; and with such success as to induce Henslowe and his son-in-law, the cele-

[2] They usually hired the writers, and advanced them money upon the credit of their talents, and the progress of their work, which was shewn or reported to them from time to time.

Digitized by Google

brated Alleyn, to advance money upon several of his plots in embryo; a sufficient confutation of the oft-repeated tale of his "ill writing," &c. In this year, his wife brought him a son;[3] so that he had occasion for all his exertions.

In *Every Man in his Humour*, and in the prologue to it, which breathes a similar spirit, we find strong traces of the ennobling idea, which Jonson had already formed of poetry in general, and of the true and dignified office of the Dramatic Muse.

[3] To this child, perhaps, the players stood god-fathers. A foolish story is told in some old jest-book, which would scarcely be worth repeating here, were it not for the notable use which is made of it by the commentators on Shakspeare. "Shakspeare was god-father to one of Ben Jonson's children, and after the christening, being in deep study, Jonson came to cheer him up; and asked him why he was so melancholy? No faith, Ben, says he, not I; but I have been considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my god-child, and I have resolved at last. I prithee what, says he? I'faith, Ben, I'll e'en give her a dozen good Latin (latten) spoons, and thou shalt *translate* them. This *jest* (it is Capell who speaks) will stand in need of no comment with those who are at all acquainted with Jonson: it must have cut to the quick; and endanger'd the opening some old sores about the latter's *Sejanus*, whose latinity produced its damnation: this play was brought upon Shakspeare's stage in 1603, (the first year of his management,) and he performed in it himself: and the miscarriage sour'd Jonson, and he broke with the manager; venting his spleen against him in some of his prefaces, in terms oblique but intelligible, and breathing *malice* and *envy:* the breach was healed at this time; but with *some remembrance* of it on the part of Shakspeare." *Notes on Shak.* vol. i. p. 94. It would be a mere loss of time to strive to fix a period for an event which never took place; though it may not be irrelevant to observe upon it, that in every occurrence between Jonson and Shakspeare which has crept into the story-books of those times, the latter is invariably represented as the aggressor. Had the foregoing anecdote been founded on fact, it would only have proved that the wit and good manners of Shakspeare's return to Ben's civility were pretty nearly equal. As the story appears in Capell, (who thought of nothing less than serving Jonson,) it has yet a worse aspect.

Digitized by Google

"Indeed, if you will look on Poesie,
As she appears in many, poor and lame,
Patch'd up in remnants, and old worn-out rags
Half-starv'd for want of her peculiar food,
Sacred Invention; then I must confirm
Both your conceit and censure of her merit.
But view her in her glorious ornaments,
Attired in the majesty of art,
Set high in spirit with the precious taste
Of sweet philosophy, and, which is most,
Crown'd with the rich traditions of a soul
That hates to have her dignity profaned
With any relish of an earthly thought;
Oh then how proud a presence does she bear!
Then is she like herself; fit to be seen
Of none but grave and consecrated eyes!"

These lines, which were probably written before he had attained his twenty-second year, do not discredit him; and let it be added, to his honour, that he invariably supported, through every period of his chequered life, the lofty character with which his youthful fancy had invested the Muse.

Some judgment of Jonson's situation at this time may be formed from a memorandum of Mr. Henslowe's, recording an advance of "five shillings:" yet even this could not induce him to have recourse for success to the popular expedients of bustle, and warlike shew, which he believed, with his classic masters, to outrage probability, and violate the decorum of the stage. In the Prologue, he says,

"Though NEED make many poets, and some, such
As art and nature have not better'd much;
Yet OUR'S, *for want* hath *not so lov'd* the stage
As he dare serve th'ill customs of the age;
Or purchase your delight at such a rate,
As, for it, he himself must justly hate."[4]

---

[4] This prologue assumes a considerable degree of importance from its being made the principal basis of the calumny against Jonson; and the reader must therefore indulge me in some

Digitized by Google

From a resolution thus early formed, he never deviated, and when it is considered that, in consequence

remarks on it. "All Shakspeare's plays are ridiculed in it," cry the commentators; and a thousand voices re-echo, "all Shakspeare's plays are ridiculed in it." It might puzzle a man of plain sense (indeed, Mr. Malone confesses that it puzzled himself at first,) to comprehend how what was written in 1596 could possibly "ridicule" what was not in existence till nearly twenty years afterwards:—but the difficulty is thus solved. The prologue was not published with the 4to. edition of *Every Man in his Humour;—therefore* it was not written till some time before the appearance of the folio;—*therefore* it ridicules all Shakspeare's plays! That any rational being should persuade himself, or hope to persuade another, that the lines were composed and spoken at this late period, can only be accounted for by the singular power of self-delusion. For many years before and after 1616 (the date of the fol.) Jonson was in a state of the highest prosperity; the favourite of princes, the companion of nobles, the pride and delight of the theatre, yet he is supposed to say that "though *poverty* made many poets, and himself, among the rest, *it* should not compel him to disgrace his judgment, &c.!—*Every Man in his Humour* had been a stock-play for nearly twenty years, during which it had probably been represented an hundred times, yet the author is imagined to beseech the audience that they would be *pleased*, TO DAY, to see *one such a play*, &c.! As if all this was not sufficient to fool the credulous reader to *the top of his bent*, he is further required to believe, that, after the *Fox*, the *Silent Woman*, the *Alchemist*, in a word, after eleven of his best pieces had obtained full possession of the stage, Jonson came forward, *for the first* time, to tell the public on what principles he proposed to construct his dramas—concluding with a hope that the spectators would like the specimen which he was now about to offer them!—And why is the public called upon to swallow these monstrous absurdities?—Because the commentators cannot otherwise prove that the great object of "Jonson's life was to persecute Shakspeare." "If the Prologue was not written about 1614," says one of the most furious of them, very ingenuously, "my speculations fall to the ground!"

If it be asked why the author did not print the Prologue with the play for which it was written, it may be demanded, in return, why many other things which appear in the fol. were not printed in the 4tos. and why much that appears in the 4tos. is not found in the folio? No better reason, I believe, can be given, than that such was the publisher's pleasure.

Digitized by Google

of it, he braved want and obloquy, whatever may be thought of his prudence, the praise of consistency

It is more than time to advert to the proofs produced by the commentators to shew how the Prologue bears on all Shakspeare's plays.

"To make a child new swaddled, to proceed
Man, and then shoot up, in *one beard and weed*,
To *fourscore* years."

"This is a *sneer* at the *Winter's Tale*, written in 1604," in which Perdita, as all the world knows, undergoes these various changes! *

——— "with three rusty swords
And help of some few foot-and-half-foot words,
Fight over York's and Lancaster's long jars"—

"This is a *sneer* at Shakspeare's three parts of *Henry VI.*" I have endeavoured, Mr. Malone says, *Shak.* vol. i. p. 492, to prove that *two* of these three parts were not written originally by Shakspeare." *Papæ!* Again: "There were *two* preceding dramas, one of which was called the contention of *York* and *Lancaster*." Why then might not this be the drama meant?—But were there not *two score* old plays on this subject on the stage? Undoubtedly there were: and I could produce numerous passages in which plays on the long jars between the two houses are mentioned, all anterior to this period.

"With *three* rusty swords." †

---

* Mr. Malone also proves that the *Duchess of Malfy* was written in 1616, simply because Jonson sneers at it in these lines. *Shak.* vol. xi. p. 545. Mr. Steevens, still more *mal-à-droit*, in a moment of heedlessness, informs us "that in Lily's *Endymion*, which comprises nearly half a century, all the personages of the drama, with one exception, continue *unchanged*, wearing the same *beard and weed* for more than *forty* years." These discoveries are unluckily made—as they may lead those who think at all, to suspect that Jonson might have other persons in view than Perdita.

† It is observed by Mr. Malone, *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 220, that "such was the poverty of the old stage, that the same person played two or three parts, and battles, on which the fate of an empire was supposed to depend, were decided by three combatants on a side." Though this be true, yet I hardly expected to find the critic joining our author in *sneering* at Shakspeare.

Digitized by Google

must, at least, be awarded to him. What else he wrote in 1597 is not known: two sums of "fower pounds," and "twenty shillings," were advanced to

This, however, with the rest of the quotation, is merely a versification, as Mr. Gilchrist has well observed, of what sir Philip Sydney had written many years before on the poverty and ignorance of the old stage. Sir Philip, indeed, says "*four* swords:" of their "rustiness" he takes no notice, and so far Jonson has shewn his spite to Shakspeare.—But how happens it that a yet stronger passage than this escaped the vigilant malice of the commentators?

——— "to disgrace
With *four* or five most vile and ragged foils,
Right ill disposed, in brawl ridiculous,
The name of Agincourt."

Here the *sneer* is evident! Here, indeed, as Mr. Malone says, "old Ben speaks out!" Here every thing is changed for the worse: the *rusty sword* for "a most vile and ragged foil;" and the *long jars* of York and Lancaster, for "a ridiculous brawl!" *Ecquid, Jupiter, tam lente, audis!*—"Not to keep the reader in suspense," however, this atrocious attack on Shakspeare was made—by Shakspeare himself! It is found in one of his most beautiful choruses to *Henry V.* One curious circumstance is yet to be noticed: although the commentators dwell upon every trifling expression on which they can possibly raise a note, yet this striking passage is slipped over by them all in solemn silence; *Shak.* vol. ix. p. 401. "There's method in this madness!"

The "foot-and-half words" are "a sneer at *Richard III.*, where we find such epithets as *childish-foolish, senseless-obstinate,* &c." It is not Jonson's fault if his persecutors prove as ignorant as they are malicious. Before the date of this prologue (1596) he had probably translated the *Art of Poetry:* there, the lines,

Telephus, et Peleus cum pauper et exul uterque,
Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba;

are thus rendered:

"——— Peleus and Telephus,
When they are poor and banish'd, must throw by
Their bombard phrase, and foot-and-half-foot words."

Here the poet, with his wonted accuracy, uses "foot-and-half-foot

Digitized by Google

him by Mr. Henslowe, upon the credit of two plays,[5] which he had then in hand: but their titles do not occur; at least with his name. The "book of which

words"—not for feeble epithets linked together by hyphens, but for swelling, vaunting, bombast language.

> "Where neither chorus wafts you o'er the seas,
> Nor creaking throne comes down the boys to please,
> ——— nor tempestuous drum."

There was scarcely a play on the stage when Jonson first came to it, which did not avail itself of a *chorus* to waft its audience over sea and land, or over wide intervals of time. Enough of both may be found in *Pericles*, *Faustus*, *Fortunatus*, and other dramas which yet remain; to say nothing of those to which allusions are made by the old critics, and which have long since worthily perished. "The *creaking throne* is a sneer at *Cymbeline*," in which Jupiter, it seems, "descends on an eagle"! "The *tempestuous* drum is a *ridicule* of the *Tempest;*" and as that comedy was not written till 1611-12-13, it ascertains the date of the prologue to a nicety.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Malone never read Jonson, as he might have saved himself and Mr. G. Chalmers a world of trouble in dandling this play backwards and forwards, on account of the last quoted passage. In a "Speech according to Horace," (vol. viii. p. 428,) undoubtedly subsequent to the *Tempest*, we find the words "*tempestuous grandlings.*" Here the allusion is not only to the *title* of the play, but most palpably to Gonzalo, Adrian, Francisco, and, perhaps, to Prospero himself!

After such overwhelming proofs it cannot but surprise the reader to hear one of Jonson's critics speak thus doubtingly: "Perhaps Shakspeare himself, *by the help of a proper application*, was designed, to be included!" O the power of candour! But far better is the writer's amended judgment. "Other dramatists had indeed written on the jars of York and Lancaster, but Jonson doth not appear to have thought *them* worthy of his notice"! And best of all is the liberal conclusion of Steevens: "The *whole of Ben Jonson's prologue* to *Every Man in his Humour* is a *malicious sneer* at Shakspeare." vol. xiii. p. 249.

[5] The following curious notices (says Mr. Malone, *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 484,) occur relative to Shakspeare's *old antagonist*, Ben Jonson."—When it is considered that Jonson was at this time scarcely 22, (Shakspeare was 32,) that by Mr. Malone's own account, he was not known to Shakspeare, whom he could in no possible way have offended, the justice of calling him the *old*

Digitized by Google

he shewed the company the plotte," might have been the *Case is Altered*.[6] He was now recent from the Roman writers of comedy, and, in this pleasant piece, both Plautus and Terence are laid under frequent contribution.

The success of *Every Man in his Humour* appears to have encouraged the author to attempt to render it yet more popular: accordingly he transferred the scene, which in the former play lay in the neighbourhood of Florence, to London, changed the Italian names for English ones; and introduced such appropriate circumstances as the place of action seemed to require. In fact, the attempt was to be expected, from the improvement which was visibly taking place in his mind. Young[7] as he was, when he wrote this drama, it is scarcely to be wondered, that he should fall into the common practice, and while

antagonist of our great poet, is not a little questionable.—The notices are: "Lent unto Benjemen Johnson player, the 22d of July 1597, in ready money, the some of fower poundes, to be payed yt agen whensoever either I or my sonne (Alleyn) shall demand yt."

"Lent unto Benjemen Johnsone the 3d of december 1597, upon a book which he was to writte for us before crysmas nexte after the date here of, which he showed the plotte unto the company: I say lent unto hime in redy money, the some of xx*s*."

[6] This comedy is usually assigned to 1598, principally because of its allusion to Antony Munday, which appeared in the *Wits' Treasurie*, published in that year. But Antony might have been called "our best plotter" before Meares wrote his pedantic conundrums; and, indeed, the words have to me the air of a quotation. I am almost inclined to set down this, as the earliest of our author's dramas; in 1598 it was already a popular piece, and it bears about it the marks of juvenility.

It is doubted in the *Bio. Dram.* whether Jonson be the author of this piece, because, says the writer, it is printed without a dedication, which is commonly prefixed to his early plays, &c. I cannot stoop to contend with sheer ignorance:—but in the first place, the play was not published by Jonson; and in the second, his dedications are more frequent in the folio, than in the 4tos.

[7] The reader of the present day, who has been accustomed to hear of nothing but "*old* Ben," will start, perhaps, to find that he

Digitized by Google

he placed his scene in Italy, draw all his incidents from his own country. It must be added to his praise, that he did not entirely neglect the decorum of place, even in this performance; but there was yet too much of English manners, and the reformation of the piece was therefore well-timed and judicious. Jonson fell into no subsequent incongruities of this kind, for the *Fox* is without any tincture of foreign customs, and his two tragedies are chastly Roman.

"But notwithstanding (Whalley says) the art and care of Jonson to redress the incongruities taken notice of, a remarkable instance of Italian manners is still preserved, which, in transferring the scene, he forgot to change. It is an allusion to the custom of poisoning, of which we have instances of various kinds, in the dark and fatal revenges of Italian jealousy. Kitely is blaming Well-bred for promoting the quarrel between Bobadill and Downright, and Well-bred offers to excuse himself by saying

once was *young*. [The appellation was first given to him by sir John Suckling, a gay, careless, good-humoured wit of the court, in 1637:

"The next that approached was *good old Ben*."]

"Good," the commentators are careful to omit; but "*old* Ben" they are never weary of repeating. Mr. Malone says that this title was not familiarly given to him during his life. In fact, it was *never* familiarly given to him, till he and his friend Steevens took it up, and applied it as a term of ridicule and contempt in every page. That Ben was termed *old* on one occasion shortly after his death, is scarcely a sufficient plea for making the appellation perpetual, or we might confer it on all the writers of his time. We hear of *old* Massinger, and *old* Shirley; and the publishers of Beaumont and Fletcher advertise their readers, "that after they shall have reprinted Jonson's two volumes, they hope to reprint *old* Shakspeare." See the Booksellers' *address*, fol. 1679. What would Mr. Malone have said if the editors of any of our old dramatists had nauseated their readers from page to page (on this authority) with a repetition of *old* Shakspeare?

Digitized by Google

that no harm had happened from it. Kitely's wife then objects to him; 'But what harm might have come of it, brother?' to whom Well-bred replies, '*Might*, sister? so might the good warm clothes your husband wears be poisoned for any thing he knows; or the wholesome wine he drank even now at table.' Kitely's jealous apprehension is immediately alarmed, and he breaks out in a passionate exclamation;

> 'Now God forbid. O me, now I remember
> My wife drank to me last, and changed the cup;
> And bade me wear *this cursed suit* to-day.'

And thus he goes on, imagining that he feels the poison begin to operate upon him. Nothing could be more in character than this surmise, supposing the persons, as was the case at first, to have been natives of Italy. But had Jonson recollected, it is probable he would have varied the thought to adapt it more consistently to the genius and manners of the speaker." *Preface*, p. xii.

I have given this tedious passage at large, because the happy discovery which it holds forth has been received with vast applause by the critics. In Hurd's letter to Mason *On the marks of Imitation*, it is said, "The late editor of Johnson's works observes *very well* the impropriety of leaving a trait of Italian manners in his *Every Man in his Humour*, when he fitted up that play with English characters. Had the scene been originally laid in England, and that trait been given us, it had convicted the poet of *imitation*." p. 18. Such solemn absurdity is intolerable. The truth is, that Jonson could not have devised a more characteristic "trait" of the times in which he wrote. Poisoning was unfortunately too well understood, and too common in this country. Elizabeth had a favourite, who, if he is not greatly belied, did not yield to the subtlest poisoner that

Digitized by Google

Italy ever produced. Osborn says that "he had *frequently heard Elizabeth* blamed for not removing Mary, queen of Scots, in the Italian fashion, by poisoning her garments," &c. p. 231. And, in fact, Elizabeth herself lived from 1594 to 1598 in constant dread of being taken off in this way; and many attempts, which kept the people in a state of agitation, were actually made to effect it. Two men were hanged in 1598 for poisoning the queen's saddle; the arm chair of Essex was found to be rubbed with some deleterious mixture; and several poisoned articles of dress, (among others, a girdle,) and pieces of furniture were publicly burned in Smithfield.

According to the custom of the times, Jonson regained the property of his comedy by these numerous alterations: it was thus acted, for the first time, in 1598, at the Black Friars, and Shakspeare's name stands at the head of the principal performers in it.[8] The commentators appear to consider this as a mark of peculiar condescension on the part of our great poet, choosing to forget that he was an actor by profession, and that he derived his fortune from the theatre. He was not yet so independent of wealth but that he continued on the stage at least sixteen years longer; and, in the course of that time probably played a part in more than one piece not greatly superior to the present comedy, without suspecting that he was conferring any very particular obligation on the authors.

To this period (1598) is commonly assigned the commencement of our author's acquaintance with Shakspeare. "Ben Jonson presented *Every Man in his Humour* to one of the leading players in that

[8] The old play probably remained at the Rose, where it had been brought out.

Digitized by Google

company of which Shakspeare was a member. After casting his eye over it superficially, the comedian was on the point of returning it with a peremptory refusal; when Shakspeare, who perhaps *had never till that instant seen* Jonson,[9] desired he might look into the play. He was so well pleased with it on perusal, that he recommended the work and the author to his fellows. Notwithstanding this kindness, the prologue to his play is nothing less than a satirical picture of the *Tempest, Lear, Henry V.* &c." *Dram. Miscel.* vol. ii. p. 56.

"*Every Man in his Humour* (says Mr. Malone, in twenty places,) was acted in 1598: it appears to be Jonson's first performance, and we may presume that *it was the very play* which was brought on the stage by the good offices of Shakspeare, who himself acted in it. *Malignant* and *envious* as Jonson was," &c. *Shak.* vol. i. p. 540. And the writers of our author's life in the *Bio. Brit.*, after giving us the same story a little embellished, are pleased to subjoin—"this *goodness* of Shakspeare was the more remarkable, as 'Jonson was, in his personal character, the very reverse of Shakspeare, as surly, ill-natured, proud, and disagreeable, as Shakspeare was gentle, good-natured, easy, and amiable.'"[1]

[9] Mr. Davies is subject to little fits of inconsistency. He seems to think, and not indeed without cause, that provided he indulges his malignity towards Jonson, the public will readily forgive the want of truth and sense. "At this time," he says, i. e. 1597, a year before Shakspeare (according to his own statement) had seen or known any thing of our poet, "to have observed Ben Jonson with an *assumed* countenance of gaiety, and with *envy* in his heart, join the groupe of laughers and applauders of *Henry IV.* must have added to the pleasure of Shakspeare's real friends," vol. i. p. 278. This is forthwith taken for proved; and the passage is boldly referred to in the Index under the head of Jonson. "Ben Jonson *envious* of Shakspeare!" But thus the life of our great poet is written; and his admirers are not ashamed of it!

[1] This exquisite character of Jonson is quoted by the biogra-

Digitized by Google

Jonson was at this period struggling for a mere subsistence:—when his persevering pursuit of knowledge, therefore, amidst difficulties of every kind, when his lofty ideas of poesy, his moral purpose in dramatic satire, his scorn of the popularity procured by sacrificing to what he deemed the vicious habits of the stage, are taken into consideration, it may almost be wondered why such singular pleasure should be found in combining to overwhelm him with obloquy.

With respect to the story just quoted, no words, I presume, are needed to prove it an arrant fable. Nor is the variation of it, which is found in Rowe, anything better. "Shakspeare's acquaintance with

phers, with great precision, from the "Works of his *friend* Drummond, Edin. 1711, fol. p. 222." It is given on the same authority in the enlarged edition of the *Theatrum Poetarum;* and more recently, by Mr. A. Chalmers, in the *Gen. Dict.* who, after repeating the poet's conversation with that hospitable gentleman, breaks out —"In short, Drummond *adds*, Jonson was," &c. vol. xix. p. 156. What will the reader say, what will he think, when he is assured that not one syllable of this quotation is to be found in any part of Drummond? It is the fabrication of one Shiels, a Scotchman, who compiled, for the booksellers, the Collection called *Cibber's Lives of the Poets*, and who, not finding his countryman's character of Jonson quite to his taste, interpolated, with kindred rancour, the abusive paragraph in question. This work was published in 1753; the *Bio. Brit.* in 1757; the others later. It thus appears, that of all who have so confidently quoted this passage "from Drummond," not one ever looked into him; and thus has the scurrility of an obscure and hackney scribbler, who lived two centuries after Jonson, been palmed upon the public as the express testimony of one "who spoke of the poet from personal knowledge."

The detection of this flagrant imposture, "this innocent jeu d'esprit," will be ill-received. A calumny against Jonson is precious in the eyes of the commentators. I shall be quite satisfied, however, if, when they repeat this ribaldry, which they will be sure to do, they give it on the authority of Mr. Robert Shiels, and not on that of "Jonson's *friend*, Drummond of Hawthornden."

Digitized by Google

Ben Jonson began with a remarkable piece of humanity. Mr. Jonson, who was at that time *altogether unknown to the world*, had offered one of his plays to the players to have it acted; and the person into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, was just upon the point of returning it to him with an ill-natured answer, that it would be of no service to their company, when Shakspeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it, as to engage him to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the public favour."[2] *Shak.* vol. i. p. 12.

That Jonson was "altogether unknown to the world" is a palpable untruth. At this period (1598) Jonson was as well known as Shakspeare, and perhaps, better. He was poor, indeed, and very poor,[3] and a mere retainer of the theatres; but he was intimately acquainted with Henslowe and Alleyn, and with all the performers at their houses. He was familiar with Drayton, and Chapman, and Rowley,

[2] In the first edition of his life of Shakspeare, Rowe inserted the usual charges against Jonson of ingratitude, jealousy, &c. Subsequent inquiry proved the injustice of this attack, and he therefore with a proper sense of what was due to truth, to his own character, and to the public, omitted the whole in the next edition. This exploded falsehood Mr. Malone, with an intrepid defiance of all that Rowe respected, brings insultingly back to him, because, as he says, "he *believes* it"! In a subsequent page, Mr. Malone notices a paragraph respecting Shakspeare which also appeared in the first edition:—"but," says he, "as Mr. Rowe *suppressed the passage* in his second edition, it may be presumed *that he found reason* to change his opinion." *Shak.* vol. i. p. 482. It is a pity that this was not thought of in the former instance!

[3] "Lent the 18 of agust 1598, to bye a boocke called *Hoate anger sone cowld*, of Mr. Porter, Mr. Cheattell and Bengemen Johnson, in full payment the some of vlib." *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 484.

"Lent unto Robert Shawe, and Jewbey the 23 of Octob. 1598, to lend unto Mr. Chapman one his playboocke and ij actes of a tragedie of *Benjemen's* plotte, the sum of iijlb." *ibid.*

Digitized by Google

and Middleton, and Fletcher; he had been writing for three years, in conjunction with Marston, and Decker, and Chettle, and Porter, and Bird, and with most of the poets of the day: he was celebrated by Meares as one of the principal writers of tragedy;[4] and he had long been rising in reputation as a scholar and poet among the most distinguished characters of the age. At this moment he was employed on *Every Man out of his Humour*, which was acted in 1599, and, in the elegant dedication of that comedy to the "Gentlemen of the Inns of Court," he says, "When I wrote this poem, I had *friendship with divers* in your Societies, who, as they were *great names* in learning, so were they no less examples of living. Of them and *then*, that I say no more, it was not despised."—And yet, Jonson was, at this time, "altogether unknown to the world"! and offered a virgin comedy (which had already been three years on the stage) to a player in the humble hope that it might be accepted![5] and this player discovered that

[4] Mr. Malone wonders why Meares should say this of Jonson who had only written the *Comedy* of *Every Man in his Humour:* and he concludes that *tragedy* was used for both species of dramatic writing. But Meares expressly distinguishes them, and gives the names of the chief writers in comedy, in the next paragraph. It does not follow, because we have no tragedies extant of this early date, that Jonson had written none. In the page just quoted, mention is made of several tragedies in which our poet was concerned, and in which, probably, "having departed with his right," he retained no property. Add to this, that, in the dedication of *Catiline* to the Earl of Pembroke, he calls it "the best of his tragedies," an expression that he would scarcely have used, had he written none but *Sejanus* before it.

Rowe knew little of the dramatic history of that age. There was no such thing as writing plays, and then taking them to the players for acceptance. Rowe was thinking of the practice of his own times.

[5] The critics have already forgotten, that Jonson "had ambled by a waggon and played old Jeronymo," that "he acted and wrote, but both ill, at several theatres," that "he was, himself, the pro-

Digitized by Google

Every Man in his Humour "would not do for the theatre," at a time when *Locrine* and old *Jeronymo*, and *Titus Andronicus*, and the worthless *Pericles* were daily exhibiting with applause! This is but a small portion of the absurdities which the world is contented to take on trust in its eagerness to criminate Jonson; for this notable tissue of falsehood and folly is introduced solely to prove "the baseness and malignity of our poet's conduct towards Shakspeare."

It would be an abuse of the reader's patience, to add another word on the imaginary introduction of this play to the stage. It was brought out, as we have seen, at the Rose, a rival theatre with which Shakspeare had not the slightest concern. To be plain—whoever introduced Jonson to the notice of the players, we may be quite sure that it was not Shakspeare, whose merit, in this case, as far as appears, must be confined to procuring for his own theatre (in Black Friars) an improved copy of a popular performance.[6]

Every Man in his Humour, though it did not, even in its altered state, much improve the finances of the author, yet brought him what he valued more.

prietor of a theatre in the Barbican," that "he had killed Mr. Marlow the poet," and been "tutor to young Raleigh," long before he produced this comedy—these are falsehoods in which they all believe; though, with the same consistent absurdity, they hold that he was at this time, wholly unknown!

[6] The play, as we have it in the folio, was acted, Jonson informs us, in 1598. In the prologues to our ancient dramas, care is usually taken to notice the variations which they had undergone, since their first appearance, if at all important. The present comedy had been radically changed: the names, the place of action, the circumstances, materially altered since it was first exhibited at the Rose, yet not the slightest allusion is made to it in any part of the prologue; a circumstance sufficient of itself, to prove that it was written and spoken previously to the re-modelling of the play, and, indeed, on its first appearance, for which it was expressly and exclusively calculated.

Digitized by Google

From this period, he perceptibly grew into acquaintance and familiarity with the first characters among the wise and great. This was not seen with equanimity by his dramatic associates, and the envy which it provoked pursued him to the end of his career. The writers on whom the theatres conducted by Henslowe and Alleyn principally relied at this time, were, besides our author, Chettle, Heywood, and Decker, men of very considerable talents, but who wrote on the spur of the occasion, and were perhaps in little better circumstances than Jonson himself. Marston and Decker, who had frequently laboured in conjunction with our poet, appear to have viewed his success with peculiar mortification, and to have lent themselves to the cabal already raised against him. What ground of offence they chose, or what motive they alleged, cannot now be told; but Jonson affirms that, at this period, they began "to provoke him, on every stage, with their petulant styles, as if they wished to single him out for their adversary."

His next piece was the comic satire of *Every Man out of his Humour*, in the Induction to which he addresses the audience in a strain that would not have disgraced the Grecian stage when Aristophanes was in his soberest, severest vein.

> "I fear no mood stamp'd in a private brow,
> When I am pleas'd t'unmask a public vice.
> I fear no strumpet's drugs, nor ruffian's stab
> Should I detect their hateful luxuries:
> No broker's, usurer's, or lawyer's gripe
> Were I disposed to say they're all corrupt"—

After more of this, Asper (the author) turns from his friends to the stage:

> "I not observ'd this thronged round till now.
> Gracious and kind spectators, you are welcome!
> Apollo and the Muses feast your eyes
> With graceful objects, and may our Minerva

Digitized by Google

Answer your hopes unto their largest strain!
Yet here, judicious friends, mistake me not;
I do not this to beg your patience,
Or servilely to fawn on your applause,
Like some dry brain, despairing in his merit.
Let me be censured by the austerest brow,
When I want art or judgment, tax me freely:
Let envious censors, with their broadest eyes,
Look through and through me, I pursue no favour."

This was not language calculated to win the audiences of those days, nor did Jonson, on any occasion, stoop to court their favour by unworthy condescensions to their prejudices. He had nobler aims in view; to correct their taste, to inform their judgment, to improve their morals; and to these he steadily adhered through good and evil report, and through all the exigents of his chequered life. It cannot therefore be wondered that he was no favourite with the vulgar, and that those who trusted for a part of their success to the expedients thus openly condemned, should eagerly raise and zealously perpetuate a clamour against him: they could not, indeed, prevent his plays from being received; but they constituted a party sufficiently numerous to be heard even amidst the applause which followed his most popular pieces.

Every Man out of his Humour was, however, well received. "Queen Elizabeth (Davies says) drawn by its fame, honoured the play with her presence; and Jonson, to pay a respectful compliment to his sovereign, altered the conclusion of his play into an elegant panegyric. Mr. Collins, the poet, first pointed out to me the peculiar beauty of this address." *Dram. Miscel.* vol. ii. p. 77. That Elizabeth was pleased cannot be doubted; she was, indeed, among the first encouragers of the youthful poet, and her kindness towards him is thus noticed by Lord Falkland:

Digitized by Google

"How great ELIZA, the retreat of those
Who, weak and injured, her protection chose,
Her subjects joy, the strength of her allies,
The fear and wonder of her enemies,
With her judicious favours, did infuse
Courage and strength into his younger muse."

Hurd calls this a comedy founded upon "abstract passions;" and bids us notice "the absurdity of the attempt:" but Hurd is more than usually unfortunate when he meddles with Jonson, of whose works, in fact, he knows nothing. In the poet's days, a very different opinion prevailed, namely, that the piece was merely personal, and that he had filled the stage with real characters. Though this was not the case, yet we may collect, from the charge, that the satire was felt, and that he had touched the foibles of the time with no unskilful hand. "He did gather humours" (the old critic says) "wherever he went:" and a judgment more quick to perceive, or more dextrous to embody whatever was extravagant or ridiculous, will not readily be found. To confess the truth, however, the dramatic poet had not far to go, at this period, for his materials. The middle aisle of St. Paul's swarmed with new and eccentric characters; every tavern lent its aid, and even the theatres supplied a description of people whose fantastic affectations a poet even less observant than Jonson might turn to excellent account for the purposes of mirth or reproof. From these, and similar sources, our author undoubtedly derived the substance of his dramas: the characters themselves are not personal, though traits of real life may be occasionally involved in them:[7] these were readily recognized, and

[7] Thus Tucca is said by Decker to speak the language of captain Hannam; and Aubrey tells us that Carlo Buffone was taken from one Charles Chester, "a bold impertinent fellow,"

Digitized by Google

eagerly appropriated by his enemies, who thus artfully raised the cry of personality against him of which the echo is yet heard.

Three distinct notices of Jonson appear in Mr. Henslowe's memorandum book for the year 1599. The sum of forty shillings was advanced to him and Decker for a play which they were writing in conjunction; a like sum for another in which Chettle was joined with them; and a third sum of twenty shillings for a tragedy which he was probably writing alone.[8] None of these are now extant; but *Cynthia's Revels*, on which he was, at this time, employed, was brought out in the following year.

This Comical Satire (for so Jonson properly terms it) was evidently directed at the grave and formal manners of the court, to which, indeed, it was subsequently dedicated. After the atrocious execution of Mary, Whitehall appears to have grown ex-

who kept company with sir Walter *in his youth.** *Letters*, vol. iii. p. 514. But besides that there is no similarity between the two characters, as may be seen by turning to the Dramatis Personæ of this comedy, the incident of which Aubrey speaks probably took place before Jonson was born, though he might have heard of it, and adopted it; if, after all, the story was not rather made up from the play. The only personal allusion which I can discover, is to Marston. Puntarvolo says to Carlo Buffone, "What, Carlo! now by the sincerity of my soul, welcome: and how dost thou, thou grand *Scourge*, or second Untruss of the time?" The reference, which *seems* very innocent, is evidently to the title of Marston's *Satires; (the Scourge of Villainie,)* but this goes no further than a name, for Carlo and Marston do not possess one feature in common. With respect to captain Hannam, he might talk extravagantly and beg impudently, without possessing the other qualities of that undaunted yet entertaining railer, captain Tucca.

[8] "The Scotts Tragedy." The piece in which he joined with Chettle and Decker is called "Robert, the second king of Scottes."

---

* Raleigh was born in 1552; in *his youth*, therefore, our author must have been in his cradle.

Digitized by Google

tremely dull. Elizabeth herself lost her spirits, and became fretful and morose. The courtiers who could not be gay, became affected, and exchanged their former fashions for fantastic and apish refinements. *Euphuïsme* was now in the full tide of prosperity, and the manners were as absurdly pedantic as the language. As Jonson lived much with the great, this could not altogether escape him; and it is not improbable that he was encouraged by some of those about the queen to direct his satire against the reigning follies.

Cynthia's Revels was acted in 1600 "by the Children of the Queen's Chapel."[9] It was, at first, as

[9] The commentators, who turn every circumstance of Jonson's life into accusations against him, have here discovered a notable proof of his "ferocious temper." He must have quarrelled with the "established comedians," they say, (meaning Shakspeare, Burbage, &c.) or he would not have taken his play from their stage to give it to the Children," &c. These lynx-eyed critics do not perceive that "the children" were as popular, and as well "established" as any other company, and that they shared the Blackfriars, at which this play was performed, with the lord chamberlain's servants. Having gratuitously supposed a quarrel, the next step is to make it up. "By the mediation of friends, and most likely by the *good offices of our gentle Shakspeare*, a reconciliation was effected between this *surly* writer and the comedians." *Dram. Mis.* vol. ii. p. 83.—But the "reconciliation," it seems, did not last long: "some new quarrel with the established comedians, I *suppose*, caused him to have recourse again to the Children of the Revels," p. 105. There is not a word of sense in all this. It was no more necessary that Jonson should offer all he wrote to the same company, than any other person: he had not, like Shakspeare, an interest or a property in the theatre, and he naturally carried his talents wherever they were likely to prove acceptable. The critics who insult over his slowness, and affirm that he was a year or two "about every play," must have excellent notions of œconomy, if they suppose that a family could be supported on the sale of it. He wrote, like his contemporaries, for many theatres, and probably mended many plays. The theatre, however, with which he was most closely connected at this time, was Henslowe's; and while his enemies are pleased to *suppose* a succession of quarrels with this and that

Digitized by Google

the title page to the 4to. expresses it, "privately acted." The puerile games, the ceremonious fopperies conducted with such inflexible gravity, might, to those who probably comprehended both the motive and the objects of the drama, be sufficiently entertaining: for its subsequent success, it must have been indebted to the delight which the good citizens took in seeing the fantastic tricks of the courtiers exposed to ridicule. The prologue to this play is beautifully written: and would seem to have been originally addressed to a select audience: (perhaps at Whitehall:) the epilogue is in a different strain, and its arrogant conclusion was long remembered to the author's annoyance.[1]

That this drama should give offence to those whose grotesque humours it exposed, was, perhaps, to be expected; but it does not very clearly appear why the little knot of critics, headed by Marston and Decker should take any part of it to themselves; as they manifestly affected to do. The characters which the majority fixed upon, cannot be known; but the leaders seem to have appropriated to themselves those of Hedon and Anaides. The resem-

theatre, he was evidently living on terms of friendship with them all; writing, at one and the same time, for the Rose and the Blackfriars, for the Fortune and the Globe.

[1] It is alluded to by the anonymous author of *Par Pari*, in his address to the reader.

"Yet be not proude, though thou their praise dost gaine;
'Tis for a better pen than mine to say,
By —— 'tis good, and if you lik't you may."

To bully critics in similar terms was then the mode. There is enough of it in Decker alone to prove that Jonson was far from singular in this indecent defiance.—But he was probably inflated for the moment with the favourable reception of the court; and would not allow the city to question its infallibility.

In this year *Every Man out of his Humour* was given to the press: it is dedicated to the gentlemen of the Inns of Court, and seems to be the first of our author's works that was printed.

Digitized by Google

blance is not obvious to us, and could not, one would think, be very perceptible to the keener optics of those days; but Marston and Decker were eager to revenge the imaginary insult, and readily consented to lead the attack now meditated against him. Of this Jonson obtained full information; for the secret was ill kept by the poets; and as they persisted in ridiculing him on the stage, he found it necessary to draw up the *Poetaster*, in which, together with the untrussing, the whipping, and the stinging, he anticipated and answered many of the accusations subsequently brought against him in the *Satiromastix*. The high and magisterial language which our author held in the prologue to the first of his acknowledged pieces, has been already noticed; the same language (but in a loftier tone) is repeated in *Cynthia's Revels*, where, in imitation of the parabasis of the old comedy, the poet appears to speak in his own person; this novelty on the English stage was probably viewed with peculiar impatience, since much of the spleen of his enemies was directed against the speeches of Asper, and Crites in the last of his comic satires.

The *Poetaster* was brought out at the Blackfriars, by the children of the Queen's Chapel, in 1601;[2]

[2] In this year "*Bengemy*" was employed by Mr. Henslowe in "writing *adycions* for Jeronymo." They were so much to the manager's taste, that Mr. Alleyn was authorized to advance xxxx*s.* on them. Had the records of any other theatres been preserved, we should probably have found the name of our poet among their supporters for he must have produced much more at this time than has reached us. *Every Man in his Humour*, as first written, and performed at the Rose, was printed this year. I do not believe that it was given to the press by Jonson, who must rather have wished for its suppression, as the improved play had now been four years before the public. It is evident that whatever he wrote for Mr. Henslowe was purchased outright:—the present copy, therefore, must have stolen into the world, from the prompter's book, as was not unfrequently the case.—It is ob-

Digitized by Google

its object cannot be better given than in his own words:

> ——— "three years
> They did provoke me with their petulant styles
> On every stage; and I at last, unwilling,
> But weary, I confess, of so much trouble,
> Thought I would try if shame could win upon 'em,
> And therefore chose Augustus Cæsar's times,
> When wit and arts were at their height in Rome,
> To shew that Virgil, Horace, and the rest
> Of those great master spirits, did not want
> Detractors then, or practicers against them:
> And by this line, although no parallel,
> I hoped at last they would sit down and blush."

As Marston and Decker had headed the cabal against him, he introduced them under the respective names of Crispinus and Demetrius; Marston is very distinctly marked; Decker might, perhaps, have "sat still unquestioned," at least, with posterity, had not the justice of the satire filled him with rage, and induced him to appropriate the character of Demetrius to himself in an angry recrimination.

The *Poetaster* was written (Jonson says) in fifteen weeks, and it is certainly as creditable to his talents as his industry. It was favourably received by the public, though it gave offence to some of the military and the law. This could only arise from the slavish condition of the stage, which was then at the mercy of every captious officer who chose to complain to the master of the revels; for the satire, if such it be, is put into the mouths of such speakers as would almost convince an impartial spectator that it was designed for a compliment.[3] Of the soldiers,

servable that our author's name is mispelt in the title page. There is not a single instance, I am well persuaded, in which he writes his name Johnson.

[3] Nothing can more clearly mark the tone of hostility with which every act of Jonson is pursued, than the obloquy which is *still* heaped on him for these speeches. It would be far more

Digitized by Google

Jonson got quit without much difficulty; but the lawyers were not so easily shaken off; and he was indebted, in some degree, for his escape, to the kindness of one of his earliest friends, "the worthy master Richard Martin," who undertook for the innocency of his intentions to the lord chief justice, and to whom he subsequently dedicated the play.

But there was yet a party which could neither be silenced nor shamed. The players, who had so long provoked him with their petulance on the stage, felt the bitterness of his reproof, and had address enough to persuade their fellows that all were included in his satire. Jonson readily admits that he taxed some of the players, as, indeed, he had a just right to do; but he adds, that he touched but a few of them, and even those few he forbore to name. He treats their clamours, however, with supreme contempt, and only regrets the hostility of *some better natures*, whom they had drawn over to their side, and induced to *run in the same vile line with themselves*. By *better natures*, the commentators assure us that Shakspeare was meant, and Mr. Malone quotes the passage in more than one place to evince the *malignity* of Jonson—as if it were a crime in him to be unjustly calumniated! I trust that Jonson was not exhibited in a ridiculous light at the Blackfriars; and, in any case, it is quite certain that the players on whom he retorts were to be found in the companies of the Swan, the Hope, the Fortune, and other houses situated on the river, or, as he expresses himself, "on the other side the Tiber." It would not redound greatly to the honour of Shakspeare's humanity,

just, as well as generous in us to applaud the intrepid spirit with which he dared, in slavish times, to vent his thoughts, than to join in a silly clamour against his "arrogance and ill-nature." He stood forward as a moral satirist, and the abuses both of the law, and the military service, were legitimate objects of reprehension.

Digitized by Google

if he should be found to have used his "weight and credit in the scene," to depress a young writer dependent on it for subsistence. I do not, however, think that Shakspeare was meant.[4]

Be this as it may, Jonson was induced, after a few representations, to add to it, what he calls an Apologetical Dialogue, in which he bore the chief part. It was spoken only once, and then laid aside by

[4] There is yet a charge from which it will not be so easy to exculpate Shakspeare. In the *Return from Parnassus*, written about this time (1602) Kempe and Burbage are introduced, and the former is made to say,—"Few of the University pen plays well; they smell too much of that writer, Ovid, and that writer's *Metamorphoses*, and talk too much of Proserpine and Jupiter. Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down: ay, and Ben Jonson too. O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow, he brought up Horace giving the poets a pill; but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit." To this, Burbage, who seems somewhat ashamed of his associate, merely replies, "It's a shrewd fellow, indeed:" and changes the subject.—"In what manner," Mr. Malone says, "Shakspeare put Jonson down, does not appear." I should think it clear enough. He put him down as he put down every other dramatic writer. "Nor does it appear," he continues, "how he made him *bewray his credit.* His retaliation, we may be well assured, contained no gross or illiberal attack, and, perhaps, did not go beyond a ballad or an epigram."—But with Mr. Malone's leave, if it went as far as either, Shakspeare was greatly to be blamed, for Jonson had given him no offence whatever. I will take upon myself to affirm that the *Poetaster* does not contain a single passage that can be tortured by the utmost ingenuity of malice, into a reflection on our great poet. It will scarcely be credited, that the sentence last quoted should be immediately followed by these words: "Shakspeare has, *however*," (i. e. notwithstanding he had written a ballad against Jonson) "marked his disregard for the *calumniator* of his fame" (i.e. for the unoffending object of his ridicule) "by not leaving him any memorial by his Will." *Shak.* vol. i. p. 541. Let Mr. Malone answer for the unforgiving temper with which he has dishonoured Shakspeare;—I believe nothing of it. Kempe is brought forward as the type of ignorance, in this old drama; but a darker quality than ignorance must possess those, who draw from his language any indications of Jonson's "malignity" to Shakspeare. And again, with Mr. Malone's permission, how can

Digitized by Google

command.[5] It is remarkable, the critics say, for nothing but arrogance. It is certainly not wanting in self-confidence; but it has something besides,—a vein of high-toned indignation springing from conscious innocence, and worth, and a generous burst of pathos and poetry in the concluding speech, to which an equal will not easily be found.

If Jonson expected to silence his enemies by giving them "a brave defiance," or even by proving his own innocence, he speedily discovered his mistake. Decker, who had sustained the part of Demetrius, was (apparently to his own satisfaction) put forward by the rest,[6] and as he was not only a rapid but a popular writer, the choice of a champion

we be *so sure* that the *ballad* or the *epigram* which is here supposed to be written against Jonson contained nothing gross or illiberal? Time has spared two specimens of Shakspeare's mode of "attack." It so happens that one of them is a *ballad* and the other an *epigram;* the first written on a person whose park he had robbed, and the second, on a friend who left him a legacy. If there be nothing "gross or illiberal," in either of these, the "assurance" may be trusted.

[5] Not in consequence of the interference of the town, as Mr. D'Israeli thinks; the town would, probably, have heard it with pleasure. Jonson's own account is, that "he was restrained from repeating it *by authority*." These words are found only in the 4to. edit. and Mr. D'Israeli probably consulted the fol. *Quar. of Authors*, vol. iii. p. 135.

[6] Jonson must have been aware of this; for he makes one of the players say of Decker, "his doublet's a little decayed, otherwise he is a very simple honest fellow, sir, one Demetrius, a dresser of plays about the town, here; we have hired him to abuse Horace, and bring him in, in a play." vol. ii. p. 436. And, a few lines lower, he makes Tucca promise that "Crispinus (Marston) shall help him." It might have been expected that Marston, who is, in fact, the *Poetaster*, would have been the principal in the meditated plan of revenge; but he was, perhaps, too slow for the wrath of his associates: it is also possible that he might not be equally exasperated with them; for it is observable that he is treated with some kind of deference as compared with his "hanger-on," and that more than one allusion is made to the respectability of his birth.

Digitized by Google

was not injudicious. The *Satiromastix* was produced in 1602. Jonson had played with his subject; but Decker writes in downright passion, and foams through every page. He makes no pretensions to invention, but takes up the characters of his predecessor, turns them the *seamy side without*, and produces a coarse and ill-wrought caricature. Tucca, who, in Jonson's hands, is amusing with all his insolence and rapacity, degenerates with Decker into a mere candidate for Tyburn.[7] Nor is this the worst. In transferring the scene from the court of Augustus to England, Decker has the inconceivable folly to fix on William Rufus, a rude and ignorant soldier, whom he ridiculously terms "learning's true Mæcenas, poesy's king," for the champion of literature, when his brother, Henry I., who aspired to the reputation of a scholar, would have entered into his plot with equal facility.[8]

In the concluding lines of the Apologetical Dialogue, Jonson announces that, "since the comic muse had been so ominous to him, he would try if tragedy had a kinder aspect."[9] He had two subjects at this

[7] Although I cannot avoid thinking that Decker has failed altogether in the *Untrussing of the Humorous Poet*, I do not deem lightly of his *general* powers. He was a slovenly and a hasty writer, (perhaps from necessity,) but he was a keen and vigorous observer; and he has occasional flights of poetry, which would do honour to any talents. We have, I believe, but the smallest part of what he wrote; for, with the exception of Heywood, none of our old Dramatists were more prolific.

[8] Hawkins, who, like the rest of his tribe, can see no fault in any one but Jonson, observes on this parody—"We cannot help being inclined to favour Decker, who only meant to retaliate the insults of his rival"—then follows the usual raving about Jonson's *envy*, &c. But Hawkins chooses to forget, as, indeed, they all do—that Decker was the aggressor, and that, in conjunction with others, he had been ridiculing Jonson on every stage for *three years* before he sat down to write the *Poetaster*. *Yet this is your "harmless" fairy!*

[9] Jonson does not mean by this, as Upton and others insinuate,

Digitized by Google

time in view. The first, which was written for Mr. Henslowe's[1] theatre, does not appear; the second, *Sejanus*, was brought out at the Globe, in 1603. This tragedy, in which Shakspeare played a part, met with great opposition on its first presentation, and was withdrawn for a short time from the stage. The author, however, suffered neither in his reputation, nor his peace on the occasion: his fame was too well established to be affected by the fury of a party, and he proceeded, at leisure, to re-model his play.

About this time Jonson probably began to acquire that turn for conviviality for which he was afterwards noted. Sir Walter Raleigh, previously

that his comedies had been ill received,—for the contrary was the fact;—but that the present one (the *Poetaster*) had subjected him to the censure of the Law, the Army, &c.

[1] The following notice is taken from Henslowe's memorandum-book. "Lent unto Bengemy Johnsone at the appoyntment of E. Alleyn and Wm. Birde the 22 June 1602, in earnest of a boocke called *Richard Crook-back*, and for new adycions for Jeronymo, the some of x lb." "This article," Mr. Malone observes, "ascertains that Jonson had the *audacity* to write a play after our author (Shakspeare) on the subject of *King Richard III.*" *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 484. If there be any "audacity" in this matter, which I am not inclined to dispute, it will not, I suspect, be found on the part of Jonson. I cannot discover on what grounds Mr. Malone takes upon himself to question the right of those who never acknowledged his authority, to use their own judgment, and dispose of their own property as they pleased. It might have been supposed that Henslowe and Alleyn, the one a very shrewd and the other a very sensible man, could be trusted with providing pieces for their own stage. It does not seem a necessary consequence that Shakspeare's selecting a particular part of our history should preclude the rest of the world from touching it; and he, "who never," as Mr. Malone says, "took up a subject which had not been previously dramatised by others," had surely the least right to complain of those who acted, or those who wrote on the same theme with himself. From the sum advanced on this play, the managers must have thought well of it. It has perished, like most of the pieces brought out at their theatre; because they endeavoured to keep them in their own hands as long as possible.

Digitized by Google

to his unfortunate engagement with the wretched Cobham and others, had instituted a meeting of *beaux esprits* at the Mermaid, a celebrated tavern in Friday-street. Of this Club, which combined more talent and genius, perhaps, than ever met together before or since, our author was a member; and here, for many years, he regularly repaired with Shakspeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Selden, Cotton, Carew, Martin, Donne, and many others, whose names, even at this distant period, call up a mingled feeling of reverence and respect. Here, in the full flow and confidence of friendship, the lively and interesting "wit-combats" took place between Shakspeare and our author; and hither, in probable allusion to them, Beaumont fondly lets his thoughts wander, in his letter to Jonson, from the country.

> ——— "What things have we seen,
> Done at the MERMAID! heard words that have been
> So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
> As if that every one from whom they came,
> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest," &c.

Fairer prospects now began to open on Jonson; Elizabeth was frugal, and paid as grudgingly for her amusements, as for her more serious business: little, besides honour, was therefore derived from her patronage, and the poets were still left to the resources of their own talents; but James, who acceded to the crown at this period, was liberal to men of merit, and Jonson had the good fortune to be quickly received into his favour.

The court and city prepared to receive their new sovereign, in the taste of those times, with a magnificent display of scenery, speeches, &c. and our author was applied to for the design, and execution of the pageant. Those who have been told so often of his "vindictiveness," &c. will be surprised, perhaps, to hear that his associate in this employment was

Digitized by Google

Decker, the person by whom he had been so grossly treated a few months before. Jonson took to himself two-fifths of this splendid "Entertainment;" the rest was allotted to his coadjutor. Both seem to have exerted themselves greatly, and both printed an account of their respective parts: our author's description, which is equally learned and elegant, bears no marks of resentment against his late antagonist, who, in his publication, shews himself, in more than one place, yet a little sore of the *Poetaster*. The truth is, with deference to his "friend" Drummond,[2] that Jonson, far from being vindictive, was one of the most placable of mankind: he blustered, indeed, and talked angrily; but his heart was turned to affection, and his enmities appear to have been short-lived, while his friendships were durable and sincere.

James was something of a poet, and more of a scholar; what he cultivated in himself, he loved in others: he had discrimination enough to distinguish the pure and classical construction of the pageantry which had been displayed before him;[3] as well as the extraordinary merits of the spirited "*Panegyre* on the first meeting of his Parliament;" (vol. vi. p. 426,) and he appears, from that period, to have taken the

[2] His *friend* Drummond. So the commentators delight to call him on all occasions. The term is artfully chosen. It is meant to characterize the superlative infamy of Jonson, which could compel even this generous spirit, in despite of his tender regard for the poet, to blazon his vices, and bequeath them to posterity.

[3] "The King (say the writers of the *Bio. Brit.*) was no less pedant than pageant wise; and therefore, Jonson shewed particular address in flattering him by the introduction of several copies of Latin verse."—for this, they proceed to ridicule him. The real fact is, that Jonson was *very sparing* of his "latin verses" on this occasion, and that Decker has, at least, *three for his one*. Where Decker got them, I cannot tell—perhaps from his own stores; for he had a smattering of Latin, which he is somewhat too fond of shewing:—but thus every act of Jonson is perverted by the malice or ignorance of his biographers!

Digitized by Google

poet under his especial protection. In this opinion of his genius as well as learning, he must have been strengthened by the next publication of Jonson, who had been summoned to Althorpe, to prepare a poetical compliment for the reception of the Queen and prince Henry, when expected there on their journey from Scotland to London. He must have been well acquainted with this family: he terms sir Robert Spencer his noble friend, and observes that "his principal object in suffering the *Entertainment* (4to. 1603,) to come abroad was to do that serviceable right to him which his affection owed, and his lordship's merits challenged." The Spencers have been well advised to cherish the name of the author of the *Fairy Queen*, as one of the chief honours of their family. It will not greatly derogate from them to acknowledge, at the same time, that Ben Jonson, in his early days, was among their friends and clients.

His next work, as far as any memorial of the date of his writings has reached us, was still for the gratification of the royal family. May-day had been from the earliest times, a city holyday of high account, in the celebration of which our monarchs had often joined. James, who loved, above them all, to mingle in sociable converse with his people, had accepted for himself, his queen, and his court, an invitation to keep the festival at the seat of sir W. Cavendish, near Highgate, and Jonson was engaged to give grace and elegance to the "Entertainment," by a complimentary effusion.[4] He did not discredit his employer, and his majesty must have found still further reason to be satisfied with his selection. This year also Jonson revised his *Sejanus*. As it was first acted, a *second pen had good share in it*;[5] on its failure, he,

[4] See vol. vi. p. 486.

[5] Who this "second pen" was, is not known. I have supposed it (vol. iii. p. 6.) to be Fletcher, (Shakspeare is entirely out of the

Digitized by Google

with equal delicacy and integrity, determined not to expose his coadjutor to the chance of a second defeat; but to make himself responsible for the whole. The tragedy thus recast, was received with applause, and kept possession of the stage till long after the Restoration. "It hath outlived," the author says, in the dedication of his play to lord Aubigny, "the malice of the people, and begot itself a greater favour than the subject of it lost, *the love of good* men."

"*Sejanus*" was ushered into the world by several commendatory poems, to which Jonson refers the reader as explanatory of some points relative to its reception: among these voluntary vouchers for the merits of the tragedy is Marston, who had long since repented of the part which he took against the author, and resumed his old habits of kindness.

The *Satiromastix* appeared in 1602;[6] the *Male-*

question,) but, if Beaumont's age would admit of it, (he was in his nineteenth year,) I should more willingly lean to him. Be he who he may, however, he has no reason to be displeased with the liberal acknowledgment of his merits. "I have rather chosen (Jonson says) to put *weaker*, and no *doubt, less pleasing of* mine own, than to defraud so *happy a genius* of his right by my loathed usurpation." *Ibid.* The brutal scurrility with which Jonson is assailed on this point, has been noticed elsewhere. "Shakspeare (says Capell) was the happy genius whose pen 'had so good a share in this play;' for which assistance he is here *sneer'd* at by the person he gave it to, was quarrelled with at the time, and opposed and ill-treated ever after"! *School of Shak.* p. 479. It is excellently observed by Davies, after much abuse of Jonson—"As this play was *universally* exploded, I have a suspicion that the only parts *which escaped censure* were those written by Shakspeare." vol. ii. p. 85. The only saving part of this universally exploded play being removed, the whole became popular. Such is the logic of Mr. Davies! who adds, however—with a face like Antient Pistol's at his leek,—"Jonson's name stood so high that, at the Restoration, the king's comedians, claiming a prior right to those of the duke of York, seized upon *Sejanus* and *Catiline*."

[6] Both Demetrius and Crispinus made their peace with Horace almost immediately after the appearance of this piece. It is simple dotage therefore to talk of this fray, as if it had embroiled the com-

Digitized by Google

content was probably written in the following year, as two editions of it were printed so early as 1604. This play Marston dedicated to Jonson in terms that do the highest honour to his friend, as they seem to be expressly selected for the purpose of confuting the calumnies of Decker.

"BENJAMIN JONSONIO
POETÆ
ELEGANTISSIMO
GRAVISSIMO
AMICO
SUO CANDIDO ET CORDATO
JOHANNES MARSTON
MUSARUM ALUMNUS
ASPERAM HANC SUAM THALIAM
D. D."

Nor was this all; for, in the epilogue to this play, he thus adverts to his "liberal and cordial friend," and his meditated tragedy.

"Then, till another's happier muse appears,
Till his Thalia feast your *learned* ears,
To whose *desertful lamps*, pleas'd fates impart,
Art above nature, *judgment* above art,
Receive this piece, which hope nor fear yet daunteth,
He that knows most, knows most how much he wanteth."

In the succeeding year (1605,) Marston again addresses his "most worthy friend," as one whose work (*Sejanus*) would "even force applause from despairful envy;" yet the critics affirm that in 1606, when this poet published his *Sophonisba*,[7] he attacks him upon the score of this very tragedy, which is

batants for life. Jonson appears to have had no subsequent dispute with Decker; whatever might be the case with Marston, who was exceedingly wayward.

[7] It is not very probable that Mr. M. Lewis ever looked into Marston; yet some of the most loathsome parts of the *Monk* are to be found in this detestable play.

Digitized by Google

here declared to be unrivalled. Not a shadow of offence appears on the side of Jonson: yet because Marston changed his language, therefore, say the commentators, "it is probable that Ben's natural arrogance and self-sufficiency[8] had lessened their friendship, since we find Marston casting some very severe glances at his *Sejanus* and *Catiline*." As *Catiline* was not in being till 1611, no glances could be cast at it in 1606; for the rest, if Marston did not know his own mind, it seems hard to blame Jonson for it; since whatever might be the demerits of *Sejanus*, they could not be greater in 1606, than when he praised it two years before. In a word, if this play be meant, (which is no care of mine,) it will be difficult to acquit Marston of the basest flattery, or the meanest revenge; the commentators, however, can descry no fault but in Jonson.

Prior to this publication an event had taken place, which involved Marston in serious difficulties. In conjunction with Chapman, he had brought out a comedy called *Eastward Hoe!* The play was well received, as, indeed, it deserved to be, for it is exceedingly pleasant; but there was a passage in it reflecting on the Scotch, which gave offence to sir James Murray, who represented it in so strong a light to the king, that orders were given to arrest the authors. It does not appear that Jonson had any considerable share in the composition of this piece; but as he was undoubtedly privy to its writing, and an "accessary before the fact," he justly considered himself as equally implicated with the rest. He stood in such favour, however, that he was not molested; but this did not satisfy him; and he therefore, with a high sense of honour, "VOLUNTARILY"

[8] This is, no doubt, a translation of Marston's *candido et cordato!*

Digitized by Google

accompanied his two friends to prison, determined to share their fate. As usual, the whole blame is thrown upon Jonson, though, in the only record which remains of this transaction, he expressly declares that he had nothing to do with the offensive passage, "Chapman and Marston, (as he told Drummond) having written it amongst them." "He indulged (say the writers of the *Bio. Brit.*) the *sourness of his disposition*, in a satirical comedy, written against the Scots."[9] And Mr. A. Chalmers adds that "it was indeed a foolish ebullition for a man in his circumstances to ridicule the Scotch nation in the court of a Scotish king." The steady friendship, the generous devotement of Jonson, are studiously kept out of sight, while Marston and Chapman, are held up as sacrifices to the sourness of his disposition.

They were not released, the biographers say, without much interest, and Camden and Selden are

[9] Written *against the Scots!*—would not this lead one to suppose that the Scotch were the principal objects of the piece? Yet the only mention which is made of them occurs in the following passage.* "You shall live freely there" (i. e. the new settlement of Virginia) "without serjeants, or courtiers, or lawyers, or intelligencers; only a few industrious Scots perhaps, who indeed are dispersed over the face of the whole earth. But as for them, there are no greater friends to Englishmen and England, when they are out on't, in the world, than they are: and, for my part, I would a hundred thousand of them were there, for we are all one countrymen now, ye know, and we should find ten times more comfort of them there than here." *Old Plays*, vol. iv. p. 250. This little burst of satire, (which is not found in Chetwood's edition,) was probably heard with applause. The times were well inclined to apply it; and so far its suppression might be expedient. With respect to the "*sourness*" of Jonson, it would be somewhat difficult to discover any signs of it in *Eastward Hoe!* which is uncommonly sprightly and good humoured.—But the critics never looked into it.

* The words of Drummond are, "he was accused by sir James Murray to the king for writing *something* against the Scots *in a play* called *Eastward Hoe!*"

Digitized by Google

supposed to have supplicated the throne in favour of Jonson. This is a mere guess, and at best, an unlucky one. Had such been needed, our author had far more powerful intercessors at court than either of those, whose influence with the sovereign was by no means equal to his own. It is probable that no very serious punishment was ever meditated; or if there were, that the desire to spare Jonson operated in their favour, and procured an unconditional pardon.

When they were first committed, a report had been propagated, Jonson says, that they should have (their ears and noses cut, i. e. slit.[1]) This had reached his (mother); and, at an entertainment[2] which he made on his deliverance, "she drank to him, and shewed him a paper which she designed, if the sentence had taken effect, to have mixed with his drink, and it was strong and lusty poison. To shew that she was no churl," Jonson adds, "she designed to have first drank of it herself." From such a mother he must have derived no small part of his unconquerable spirit.

[1] It is amusing to read the different versions of this passage. "His Majesty (says the *Bio. Brit.*) ordered that their ears and noses should be *cut off in the pillory*." And Chetwood, more bloody still, adds, "that it was with the greatest difficulty, and incessant solicitations of the prime nobility, Jonson" (no other culprit is named, or even hinted at) "escaped a severe punishment, that is to say, having his ears nailed to the pillory, and cut off by the common hangman, and perpetual banishment!" *Life of B. Jonson*, p. iv. All this is raised upon the simple passage in the text, for there is no other! What is yet more ridiculous—it is highly probable that most of those who have maligned Jonson for "writing a satire against the Scotch," had, like Chetwood and the *Bio. Brit.* an edition of this comedy before them in which the Scotch are not once named, or even hinted at!

[2] At this entertainment "Camden, Selden, and others were present." This is the sole authority for their names being selected as intercessors for Jonson's pardon. And thus his Life is written!

Digitized by Google

Having obtained a pardon, Mr. A. Chalmers says, Jonson endeavoured to conciliate his offended sovereign by taxing his genius to produce a double portion of flattery. He had, in the opening of this very paragraph, accused him of a rough and savage disposition which nothing could tame! The charge of "redoubled flattery," on this account, is also brought against him, but with much more virulence, by the writers of the *Bio. Brit.* It happens, however, somewhat unluckily for these ingenious speculators, that the masque which he produced on his release was not written at all to flatter the king. The fact is, that there were at this period (1605) several noble and royal foreigners in this country; and to receive them in a manner worthy of the splendour and magnificence of the English court, the Queen, who had not forgotten the exquisite entertainments of Althorpe and Highgate, "expressly injoined" the poet to prepare a Masque in which she and the prime beauties of the land, might bear a part. This gave rise to the *Masque of Blackness*, in which the King is scarcely noticed, and which those who accuse the writer of "taxing his genius for a double portion of flattery to soothe his offended sovereign," will do well to read before they proceed to belie his character a second time.

"Jonson employed a year or two in composing a play."[3] This judicious remark, which Mr. Malone has introduced among the striking proofs of our author's "malevolence" to Shakspeare, is yet capable of some qualification. We have seen that this had been rather a busy year with Jonson, yet he found time to produce the comedy of the *Fox*, one of the dramas of which the nation may be justly proud. It was written, he says, "in five weeks," and we cannot

[3] *Shak.* vol i. p. 542.

Digitized by Google

doubt the truth of his assertion, which was openly made on the stage. No human powers, however, could have completed such a work in such a time, unless the author's mind had been previously stored with all the treasure of ancient and modern learning, on which he might draw at pleasure.[4] The triumph of Mr. Malone and others therefore, over his slowness is somewhat like that of Mr. Thomas Thumb over the giants—"he made them first of all, and then he kill'd them!" Before Jonson was three and twenty he had mastered the Greek and Roman classics, and was, at the period of which we are now speaking, among the first scholars of the age. Did Mr. Malone think that his "studies lay in Green's works"! He had written several of his Masques and Entertainments, and almost the whole of his Epigrams; he had translated Horace, and, as it would seem, Aristotle's Poetics, and prepared a voluminous body of notes to illustrate them; he had made prodigious collections in theology, history, and poetry from the best writers, and, perhaps, drawn up his Grammar; yet the charge is still repeated, as if it were intitled to full credit. To be just, however, it was first brought forward by the poet's con-

[4] Jonson was in the laudable habit of making large extracts from the striking passages, and writing notes, and observations of a critical nature on all the books which he read. His common-place book, therefore, was a repository of everything valuable. Lord Falkland seems to have been astonished at the extent and variety of his collections. He says;

> "His learning such, no author, old or new,
> Escaped his reading that deserved his view;
> And such his judgment, so exact his taste,
> Of what was best in books, or what books best,
> That had he join'd those notes his labours took,
> From each most prais'd and praise-deserving book,
> And could the world of that choice treasure boast,
> It need not care though all the rest were lost."

Digitized by Google

temporaries,[5] and almost as soon as he began to write: it gave him, however, no concern; indeed he rather falls in with it.[6] When the heroes of the

[5] "Mr. Ben Jonson and Mr. Wm. Shakspeare being merrie at a tavern, Mr. Jonson begins this for his epitaph,

Here lies Ben Jonson
Who was once one——

he gives it to Mr. Shakspeare to make up, who presently writte,

That, while he liv'd was a *slow* thing,
And now, being dead, is *no*-thing."

This stuff is copied from the Ashmole papers, MS. 38. It is only an additional instance of what has been already observed, that the fabricators of these things invariably make Shakspeare the most severe.

It is said by Mr. Malone that the *slowness* of Jonson is admitted by his friends; but they do not mean by this word what he does: —Mr. Malone applies it to a dulness of imagination, a want of power to bring forth without long and difficult labour; they use it of the patient revision of his productions. They speak of him as a prolific and rapid writer—whose respect for the public made him nicely weigh every word;

——— "and suffer nought to pass,
But what could be no better than it was."

Or, as another has it;

"Venture no syllable unto the ear,
Until the file would not make *smooth* but *wear*.

He was, in truth, too fastidious; and this couplet of Cartwright furnishes the key to that bareness and rigidity which we have so frequently to regret in some of his writings.

[6] "Jonson justly spurns," Mr. Cumberland says, "at the critics and detractors of his day, who thought to convict him of dulness by testifying in fact to his diligence.—But when he *subsequently* boasted of his poetical dispatch, he forgot that he *had* noted Shakspeare with something less than friendly censure for the very quality he is vaunting himself upon." *Observer*, No. lxxv. What Mr. Cumberland had *forgotten*, it is hard to say; but this *vaunt* of Jonson was first made in 1601, while the allusion to Shakspeare occurs in the *Discoveries*, and is probably thirty years posterior to the passage which is here placed before it in point of time! Besides; it is *not* of the rapidity of Shakspeare's composition that Jonson speaks, but the carelessness.—A man may write fast, and yet not

Digitized by Google

Poetaster, which was written in fifteen weeks, maintained that he scarcely brought forth a play a year, he replied,

> ——— "'tis true:
> I would they could not say that I did that:
> There's all the joy that I take in their trade!"

The *Fox* was received, as it well deserved to be, with general applause. The author's enemies however were not inactive: they could not venture to question his talents; they therefore turned, as usual, their attacks against his character, and asserted that, under the person of Volpone, he had satirized Sutton, the founder of the Charter House, his friend and benefactor.[7] It is not a little amusing to see the calumniators of our poet in that age, driven to the same absurdities as those of the present day. Two characters more opposite in every respect than those

wreck a vessel on the coast of Bohemia. The *Fox* was rapidly written; but it is not, therefore, incorrect: and what Mr. Cumberland adds of it is as creditable to his taste as learning. "It must on all hands be considered as the master-piece of a very capital artist; a work that bears the stamp of elaborate design, a strong, and frequently a sublime vein of poetry, much sterling wit, comic humour, happy character, moral satire, and unrivalled erudition; a work

> *Quod nec imber edax, aut Aquilo impotens*
> *Posset diruere*, &c."

[7] "Sutton's biographer (S. Herne) after noticing this report, says—'It is probable the poet never intended what they think: for in that age several other men were pointed at, and who was the true person, was *then* a matter of doubt!' *Dom. Carthus.* p. 42. It is no longer so—we are better judges of these matters than the contemporaries of Sutton, and decide without difficulty." I regret to find Mr. D'Israeli among the poet's accusers; for he is an anxious inquirer after truth, and brings, as far as I have been able to discover, an unprejudiced mind to his investigations. His fault is too great a deference for names unworthy of his trust. This is an evil which every day will contribute to abate. Twice in one page (*Quarrels of Authors*, vol. iii. 134.) he charges Jonson with bringing Sutton on the stage.

Digitized by Google

of Sutton and Volpone are not to be found in the history of mankind. Sutton inherited a large estate; he was one of the greatest traders of his time, he had agents in every country, and ships on every sea: he had contracts, mines, mills, ploughs, he was a naval commissioner, and master of the ordnance in the north; in a word, one of the most active characters of an active period. Now mark the description of Volpone, as given by himself, in the opening of the play:

> ——— "I glory
> More in the *cunning purchase* of my wealth
> Than in the glad possession! since I gain
> No *common* way. I *use no trade*, no *venture*,
> I wound no earth with *plough-shares*, fat *no beasts*
> To feed the shambles; have no *mills* for iron,
> Oil, corn, or men, to grind them into powder;
> I blow no subtle glass, expose no *ships*
> To threatnings of the furrow-faced seas;
> I turn no monies," &c. &c.

Sutton was a meek and pious man, Volpone is a daring infidel; Sutton was abstemious, but kind and charitable; Volpone is painted as the most selfish and unfeeling of voluptuaries:

> ——— "prepare
> Me music, dances, banquets, all delights:
> The Turk is not more sensual in his pleasure
> Than will Volpone be."

Again: Volpone is a creature of ungovernable lust, a monster of seduction; Sutton was the husband of one wife, to whose memory he was so tenderly attached, that upon her death, which took place about two years before the date of this piece, he had retired from the world, to a life of strictness and reserve; he was, at this time, nearly fourscore, and bowed down to the grave with sorrow for his loss, while Volpone, in the full vigour of manhood, exclaims—

Digitized by Google

"what should I do
But cocker up my genius, and live free
To all delights?—See, I am now as fresh,
As hot, as high, and in as jovial plight,
As when, in that so celebrated scene,
For entertainment of the great Valois
I acted young Antinous?"

In a word, the contrast is so glaring, that if the commentators on Shakspeare had not afforded us a specimen of what ignorance grafted on malevolence can do, we should be lost in wonder at the obliquity of intellect which could detect the slightest resemblance of Sutton in the features of Volpone.

The *Fox* is dedicated, in a strain of unparallelled elegance and vigour, to the two Universities, before whom it had been represented with all the applause which might be anticipated from such distinguished and competent judges of its worth.[8] The English stage had hitherto seen nothing so truly classical, so learned, so correct, and so chaste.

About this time, our author, who had deeply studied the grounds of the controversy between the reformed and catholic churches, and convinced himself, by the aid of those *wiser guides* who followed truth alone, of the delusions of popery, made a solemn recantation of his errors, and was re-admitted into the bosom of the church, which he had abandoned twelve years before.[9] Drummond tells us that "he

[8] There is an allusion to this circumstance in the verse of Jonson's friend E. S. (Edward Scorey?)

—— "now he (the *Fox*) hath run his train and shown
His subtile body, where he best was known,
In both Minerva's cities, he doth yield
His well-form'd limbs upon this open field," &c.

[9] Among the works of our author, Wood inserts one printed in 1622, 8vo. and called *His Motives*. If Jonson really wrote such a book, it might be supposed to relate to this circumstance: but the probability is, that this industrious antiquary mistook the writer's name: of the work itself I have no knowledge whatever.

Digitized by Google

drank out the full cup of wine, at his first communion, in token of his true reconciliation." Jonson's feelings were always strong; and the energy of his character was impressed upon every act of his life; but this story is foisted into his conversations by his "friend," and has, perhaps, no better foundation than many others wantonly invented to discredit him. It may not, however, be irrelevant to observe, that more wine was drank at the altar in the poet's days, than in ours; and that the vestiges of this custom are not yet entirely obliterated, in remote situations.

Jonson had not been inactive between the first representation of the *Fox* and its publication. The Queen's brother (Christian of Denmark) paid her a visit in the summer of 1606, and our poet was called upon to furnish some of the pageantries prepared for his amusement. Of these we have little remaining but a few epigrams in Latin verse, which were displayed round the walls of the inner court "at Theobalds," when the earl of Salisbury received the royal brothers there on the 24th of July. In the subsequent summer (1607) Theobalds was delivered up to the Queen in exchange for Hatfield Chase. A magnificent entertainment was prepared on the occasion, at which James and his Queen, the two princes, the duke of Lorraine, and all the principal nobility were present; and the house was transferred to the new possessor in an elegant poetical apologue composed by Jonson, and distinguished by his usual felicity of appropriate character and language. Cecil had done himself honour by his early patronage of our author; and he, who was one of the most grateful and affectionate of mankind, embalmed the ashes of his benefactor in strains that yet live.

Previously to this, however, Jonson had written his beautiful *Masque and Barriers* for the marriage of the earl of Essex, which was celebrated at White-

Digitized by Google

hall with extraordinary magnificence, in the Christmas of 1606. The poet has entered with some complacency into the richness and variety of this exhibition, which seems to have astonished the beholders:[1] he drops a word too in justification of

[1] We have other evidence than the poet's for this splendid display. The kindness of Mr. D'Israeli has furnished me with the following curious and interesting extract from a MS. letter of Mr. Pory to Sir Robert Cotton. Sir Robert, like most of the great men, at this time, when absent from court, had a correspondent (generally some secretary) there, who furnished them with regular accounts of the various occurrences of the day. Sir Robert was fortunate in his informant.*

—— "Inigo, Ben, and the actors, men and women, did their parts with great commendation. The conceit or soul of the Mask was Hymen bringing in a bride, and Juno Pronuba's priest a bridegroom, proclaiming that those two should be sacrificed to Union: and here the poet made an apostrophe to the Union of the Kingdoms. But before the sacrifice could be performed BEN JONSON turned the globe of the earth, standing behind the altar, (Vol. vii. p. 53) and within the concave sat the eight men-maskers, representing the four Humours and the four Affections, who leaped forth to disturb the sacrifice to Union. But amidst their fury, Reason, that sat above them all, crowned with burning tapers, came down and silenced them. These eight, with Reason, their mediator, sat somewhat like the ladies in the Scollop-shell of the last year, (Vol. vii. p. 8.) About the Globe hovered a middle region of clouds, in the center whereof stood a grand concert of musicians, and upon the cantons sat the ladies, four at one corner and four at another, who descended upon the stage; not in the downright perpendicular fashion, like a bucket in a well, but came gently sloping down.† These eight, after the sacrifice was ended, represented the Eight Nuptial powers of Juno Pronuba, who came down to confirm their Union. The men were clad in crimson and the women in white. They had every one a white plume of the richest hern's feathers,

* Pory is mentioned with great respect by Hackluyt. He had travelled much, and seen a good deal of courts and public affairs. He was also an excellent scholar. As he was a member of parliament, he must have been a person of some property.

† Here Milton found his—"smooth sliding without step:" in truth, he found much more in Jonson's Masques, than his editors appear to suspect, or are willing to acknowledge.

Digitized by Google

the strict regard to the pure models of antiquity, after which he usually constructed his fables. Vol. vii. p. 45.

Hitherto the "flattery to which Jonson betook himself immediately after his release," has not appeared so "gross" as his biographers choose to represent it. Unfortunately for them, his next Masque, which he calls the *Queen's*, is still less to their purpose. "*Two years* (he says) being now passed that her Majesty had intermitted those delights, it was her pleasure again to glorify the court, and command that I should think on some fit presentment," &c. This produced the "*Masque of Beauty*," (a counterpart to that of "Blackness,") which was performed at court during the Christmas of 1608. In this, as in the preceding one, the performers were the queen, the prince, and the prime nobility of both sexes. At present, we are only told of the rudeness and barbarity of Whitehall; and

and were so rich in jewels upon their heads as was most glorious. I think they hired and borrowed all the principal jewels and ropes of pearls both in court and city. The Spanish ambassador seemed but poor to the meanest of them.* They danced all variety of dances, both severally and *promiscuè*, and then the women took the men as named by the Prince (Henry) who danced with as great perfection, and as settled a majesty as could be devised. The Spanish ambassador, the Archduke's ambassador, the Duke, &c. led out the Queen, the bride, and the greatest of the ladies." *Cott. Lib. Julii* c. iii. It appears that Mr. Pory was present at the performance of this Masque on Twelfth-night, 1605-6.

---

* This was not wanted to prove the unaccountable folly of Hurd (Vol. vii. p. 300) in maintaining that the Masque in the *Tempest*, which Capell, the mere idolater of Shakspeare, affirms to be "weak throughout, faulty in rimes, and faulty in mythology," &c. *Notes on Temp.* p. 68. and which was danced and sung by the ordinary performers, to a couple of fiddles, perhaps, in the balcony of the stage, "*put to shame* all the Masques of Jonson not only in its construction, but in the splendour of its shew."

Digitized by Google

Hume is so strangely ignorant of the manners of those times, as to assert that "James affected a rustic contempt of the fair sex, and banished them from his court."* Of his contempt I know nothing; but, that the ladies were not banished from his court, is proved beyond all possibility of doubt by the records of their names in the pages of our author. Year after year, and many times in the course of the same year, (for these masques were often repeated,) the court of James was thronged with all that was distinguished for birth and beauty, for rank and worth, for grace and elegance, and every female accomplishment.

The reputation of Jonson stood so high at this time, that few public solemnities were thought perfect without his assistance. The king had expressed a wish to dine with the Company of Merchant Tailors, who accordingly met to consult on the most honourable mode of receiving him. Stow has preserved the *minutes* of the court, which are not a little amusing. "Whereas the Company are informed that the King's most excellent majestie with our gratious Queene, and the noble prince and diuers honourable lords and others, determyne to dyne on the day of the eleccion of M. and Wardens, therefore the meeting was appointed to advise and consult how everie thinge may be performde for the reputacion and credit of the company, to his Majesties best lyking and contentment. And sir John Swynnerton" (afterwards lord-mayor) "is intreated to confer with master Benjamin Jonson, the poet, about a speech to be made to welcome his Majestie, and about music and other invencions which may give lyking and delight; by reason that the company doubt that their schoolmaster and scholleres be not

* Hist of England, vol. vi. p. 283.

Digitized by Google

acquainted with such kinde of entertaynments." This was done; and Stow tells us that the "Speeches" were delivered on the 16th of July, 1607, in a chamber called "The King's Chamber."

It is well known that our author received periodical sums not only from public bodies, but from several of the nobility and gentry: these, it has been said, were not bestowed as free gifts, or as honourable testimonies of his superior talents, but extorted from reluctant hands by the dread of his satire.[2] This is *mera ærugo*. The ever active malice of his most determined enemies has hitherto been unable to discover, either in his own works, or in those of others, a single syllable to justify the infamous

[2] This is boldly advanced by Mr. A. Chalmers, and in the most offensive terms. "Disappointed (he says) in the hopes of wealth and independence which his high opinion of himself led him to form, Jonson degenerated even to the resources of a libeller, who extorts from fear what is denied to genius." To require from this calumniator of the poet's memory a proof of his assertion, would be to no purpose—FOR HE HAS NONE. He who produced in the page immediately preceding this, a wicked interpolation by Shiels, and fathered it, in direct terms, on Drummond, cannot be complimented with the supposition of recurring to original documents. But the *whole* of the charge is false. Jonson was not disappointed in his hopes of riches. He gave himself no concern about them. Even his "friend" Drummond admits that, he was "careless to gain."—Wealth, in short, he heeded not, titles he rejected, and the only ambition which he ever felt was that of which Mr. Chalmers seeks to deprive him, an honest fame.

As to independence, Jonson relied on his talents for it—His story, indeed, furnishes another melancholy proof of the instability of all human things. At the age of fifty-one, he probably felt neither doubts nor fears of his sufficiency; yet at this period, he was struck with the malady that finally carried him off. In the twelve sad years that followed, during which he did little more than move from his bed to his grave, he felt the evils of dependence; and let it not be charged on him as a crime that he sought to alleviate them—not by "libels," but by humble supplications for relief. Of these several are found, of the others NOT ONE WORD was ever in existence.

Digitized by Google

calumny. The truth is, that the monarchs of those times, though approached with more awe, and served with more respect than at present, yet lived more among their people. A year seldom passed without some royal progress, and corporate bodies were frequently encouraged to feast their sovereign. On all these occasions, the custom of the time,

> "And pity 'tis, so good a time had wings
> To fly away,"—

called for something more than a bare treat, some introductory compliment that might, as it were, ennoble the entertainment, and gratify at once the judgment and the taste. As these visits were irregular, and without much previous notice, it became an object of no small importance with those who were to receive them, to have a person always at command on whose abilities they could rely for an Entertainment that should neither disgrace themselves nor their guests. Hence sprung the several pensions said to have been paid to Jonson, and which should rather be considered in the light of *retaining fees* than gratuitous donations, and still less, forced tributes to malevolence. Great and generous spirits like Sutton might indeed think their wealth not misemployed in supplying the deficiencies of fortune; but that most of what he received *was hire and salary*, scarcely admits of a reasonable doubt.

Be this as it may, he was now called upon for a *Masque* to celebrate the marriage of lord Haddington. This, which was probably the most costly and magnificent ever exhibited in this or any other country, was first performed at Whitehall on Shrove Tuesday, 1608. The Scotch and English nobility vied with each other in splendour of apparel, and the king and queen bore a part in it.

Digitized by Google

Jonson was now busily employed on the *Silent Woman* and the *Masque of Queens*, both of which appeared in 1609; the former written, it seems, to *ridicule Antony and Cleopatra*, and the latter to *rival Macbeth*, "of the success of whose witches he was jealous, as he fancied himself to be Shakspeare's superior"![3] It will be time enough to exonerate Jonson from this charge when the commentators shall have ascertained the date of *Macbeth*, which is very far from being the case at present: meanwhile, we may venture to observe that the production of two such pieces in one year, is no less creditable to his industry than to his talents and learning. The *Masque* was published, with an ample commentary, at the request of Prince Henry, who was curious to learn the authorities from which the author had derived his incantations, &c. The critics of our

[3] To omit the rest at present, Mr. Davies begins one of his chapters thus, (c. xxxiii.) "Ben Jonson's ridicule on *Antony and Cleopatra*.—Ben Jonson in his *Silent Woman* has treated this tragedy as a play full of nothing but fights at sea!" This good man is a humble follower of Mr. Malone. The sea-fights in *Antony and Cleopatra* are confined to a stage direction. "Alarum *afar off*, as at a sea-fight," i. e. a cracker was let off, so as to make a *faint noise*, just to signify that there was a *fight at a distance;* and therefore, when Morose, after enumerating a variety of the most horrid dins, adds, that he would even sit out a play *that was nothing but fights at sea*, he must mean to ridicule Shakspeare, for one that has *none!* At that very time, too, be it observed, there were scores of plays on the stage in which such fights were really exhibited: Heywood has more than one comedy with sea-fights in almost every act; and in Decker's *Whore of Babylon* there is a sea-fight that occupies the whole of a long scene; yet Jonson, who knew all this far better than ourselves, and who had been stunned a hundred times with rude representations of the *Spanish Armada* on every stage, could not speak of a sea-fight without being accused of directing the whole of his ridicule against a stage-direction in Shakspeare! It is hard to say whether the propagators of these despicable calumnies, or the believers in them, are best intitled to our scorn.

Digitized by Google

days have been pleased to sneer at Jonson for the attire of his witches. They are always unlucky. "The device of their attire (Jonson says) was master Inigo Jones's;" whom, still more to confound them, he proceeds to compliment in the warmest terms that the sincerity of friendship could select.

The year 1610, not less prolific than the preceding one, produced the beautiful *Masque of Oberon*, and the *Barriers*, written to celebrate the creation of Henry Prince of Wales, which took place on the 4th of June. The *Alchemist*, the noblest effort of Jonson's genius, appeared about the same time. This comedy he dedicated to lady Wroth, the niece of sir Philip Sidney, with whose family he maintained a constant intercourse of friendship; and, as if he meant to shew his detractors that his obligations to the ancients were those of choice, not of necessity, he constructed the whole of this wonderful drama on the vices and follies of the age, and trusted to the extent and variety of his reading for such apt allusions and illustrations as appear to spring spontaneously from the subject.[4]

Catiline, which followed the *Alchemist*, was brought out in 1611. "It was deservedly damned," Mr. Malone says; but Mr. Malone's *aye and no too, are no good divinity*, when applied to Jonson. Without questioning the accuracy of the term *deservedly*, it

[4] "Were the ancients," Mr. Headley says, "to reclaim their property, Jonson would not have a rag to cover his nakedness." With deference to this *wise young judge*, I am inclined to think that enough would remain to him of the *Alchemist* alone to obviate the danger of any indecent exposure. It is not a little singular that all the enemies of Jonson, from Dryden downwards, when they have to particularize his obligations to the ancients, refer to his two tragedies, as if he had written nothing besides, or as if they would have had him form a *Catiline* and *Sejanus* out of his own imagination!

Digitized by Google

will be sufficient to state that it was not "damned" at all. It met, indeed, with opposition (like most of his plays) from the persevering enmity which pursued him through life; but *Catiline* continued on the stage till driven from it, with every other drama, by the prevailing power of puritanism. The author inscribed it to his great patron, the earl of Pembroke, as being, in his opinion, the best of the tragedies which he had hitherto produced. He calls it a "legitimate poem;" and we may venture, notwithstanding the decision of Hurd,[5] (who appears not to have read it) to confirm his judgment. But "we know," says Davies, "from the author's own testimony, that the play was condemned." Assuredly, we *know* no such thing. Jonson evidently took a strange kind of pleasure in exaggerating the opposition which he experienced from his persecutors; and we are therefore in danger of misleading ourselves, if we adopt his expressions in all their force. It is not necessary to praise his conduct in this instance, which, to say the least of it, savours of a haughty and inflexible spirit; though it may not be improper to advert to it occasionally.

Besides publishing his play, Jonson found leisure this year to amuse himself with arranging that immense farrago of burlesque "testimonies to the author's merit," which accompanied the first appearance of *Coryat's Crudities*. In this, he seems to have engaged at the desire of prince Henry, who found entertainment in laughing at the simple vanity of the "Odcombian Traveller." Tom, it is probable, laughed more than any of them. His taste in matters of praise was not very delicate; and he

[5] "*Catiline*," he says, "is a specimen of all the errors of tragedy." Mr. A. Chalmers, who quotes the passage, joins his suffrage to that of the bishop, and speaks of it with very edifying contempt.

Digitized by Google

had cunning enough to discern that at the expense of some extravagant ridicule, which could not much affect him in his absence, he was amusing his princely patron, spreading the knowledge of his book, and filling his pockets for another course of adventures. Jonson wrote the distichs, and the introductory character of *Thomas the Coryate*, in the person of "a charitable friend," to which he added some lines on the author's name. He procured verses from all his friends, and, among the rest, from Inigo Jones, whom he seems to have regarded with peculiar kindness, and to have recommended to notice with a degree of affection which deserved a better return from the growing fortunes of the architect than he was doomed to experience.

In the succeeding year our author was probably engaged on some of those exquisite Masques which appear in the folio of 1616, and to which no dates are prefixed. The death of prince Henry threw a gloom over the nation, and saddened, for a short period, the gaiety of the court. Jonson seems to have taken advantage of the temporary cessation of festivity (for he bore no part in the celebration of the marriage of the princess) to make a second trip to the continent. How long he resided abroad, or what countries he visited, is nowhere told; we only know, from an incidental remark in his conversations with Drummond, that he was at Paris in 1613. As he was connected with the court, and in habits of intercourse with all the literary characters of his time, he must have been amply provided with recommendations to the most distinguished personages abroad. He was introduced to the Cardinal du Perron, who, in compliment to his learning, showed him his translation of Virgil, which Jonson did not approve. "He treated the Cardinal with all that bluntness which was so much his nature." Drum-

Digitized by Google

mond merely says that he told him "it was naught;" but this might be done without any bluntness of language, were it not a point agreed upon by his biographers, that he must be always "brutal and ferocious." His integrity, however, merits praise. Du Perron was a confirmed bigot, and, at this period, actively engaged in undermining the liberties of the Gallican church; he had, therefore, little leisure for poetry, and that little was misemployed.

In 1614 Jonson produced his *Bartholomew Fair*, a popular piece, but chiefly remarkable for the obloquy to which it has given birth. "About this time," Mr. A. Chalmers says, "he commenced a quarrel with Inigo Jones, and made him the subject of his ridicule." It is not so much the business of Mr. Chalmers to inquire as to write:—but, indeed, he only repeats what has been said by Steevens and others:

——— *ast alii sex*
Et plures uno conclamant ore sophistæ.

With the exception of Ferabosco, Jonson has spoken with more kindness of Inigo Jones than of any of his coadjutors, as the reader may see, by turning to his Masques. He notices him for the fifth or sixth time, with unusual warmth, in the *Masque of Queens*, and we have just seen them playing the fool together in *Coryat's Crudities*. In the winter of 1612, Jones left this country for Italy, where he resided several years. What quarrel, therefore, could Jonson possibly *commence* with him in 1614? In what year Inigo returned from his travels is not said; but according to his biographer, (who was also his relation,) it must have been long after the appearance of *Bartholomew Fair*.[6] In the notes to that comedy, (written

[6] "After the death of Prince Henry in 1612, our architect made a second tour to Italy, and continued there some years, improving

Digitized by Google

before I had read the life of the architect,) I was induced, from internal evidence, to express my doubts as to the identity of Lanthorn Leatherhead and Inigo Jones; at present, I disbelieve it altogether.[7] That some traits of personality are to be found in the character of Leatherhead I do not mean to deny; and from a few obscure hints scattered up and down our author's works, I am almost inclined to think that they point at the master of the revels (whoever he was) or his deputy. Mr. A. Chalmers, however, is so confident of his man, that he rakes into the scurrility of Walpole for fit language to express his sense of the poet's delinquency. "Whoever (says lord Orford) was the aggressor, the *turbulent* temper of Jonson took care to be most in the wrong.—In his verses he fully exerted all that brutal abuse which his contemporaries were willing to think wit, and which only serves to show the arrogance of the man who presumed to satirize Jones and rival Shakspeare."—It must be confessed that Shakspeare makes his appearance here somewhat unexpectedly:—much, however, to the satisfaction of the biographer, who subjoins, "If Jonson was the rival of Shakspeare, he deserves all this (abuse:)—but with no other claims than his *Catiline* and *Sejanus*, how could he for a moment fancy himself the *rival* of Shakspeare?" How indeed! But when Mr. Chalmers shall find leisure to read what he prints, he will discover, 1st, that Jonson had other "claims," and 2dly, that he did not fancy himself the "rival of Shakspeare."

himself in his favourite art, till he was recalled by the death of the surveyor general." *Life of Jones.*

[7] The loose reports of the time weigh nothing with me: and those who have noticed the remarks on the imaginary resemblance of Sutton and Volpone will, I flatter myself, be inclined to think as lightly of them as myself.

Digitized by Google

As no date is affixed to his minor pieces, we know not how he was employed after the production of *Bartholomew Fair*,[8] till 1616, when he brought out his excellent comedy of the *Devil's an Ass*. A considerable time must be allotted for the preparation of the folio volume which was published this year, and contained, besides comedies and tragedies, the first book of his Epigrams, several Masques and Entertainments, and a collection of poems called the *Forest*. He seems to have meditated a complete edition of all his works; but he apparently grew weary towards the conclusion of the volume, and

[8] It may be safely assumed, however, that he was engaged either in seeking or imparting useful knowledge. While his enemies dream of nothing but his "envy" of some dramatic writer, I find his name, whenever it occurs in the writings of his contemporaries, incessantly connected with subjects of general literature. He appears, about this time, (1615,) to have carried on some correspondence with Selden, respecting the precise import of that passage in Deuteronomy, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all that do so are an abomination to the Lord." c. xxii. 5. In conclusion, he desires his friend to put together what he had collected on the subject, and send it to him. Selden's answer is dated on the last day of February. It contains nearly eight folio pages full of the most curious and recondite reading—being desirous, he says, "to shew how ambitious he was not only of Jonson's love, but also of his judgment."

Nothing is more remarkable than the respect which this prodigy of learning constantly shews for the attainments of his friend.—With regard, Selden says, to what the Greeks and Latins have of Adargatis, Derceto, Atargata, Derce (all one name) &c. you *best* know, being *most* conversant in the recondite parts of human learning," &c. and he concludes, after a variety of extracts from the Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, &c. "In the connexion of these *no vulgar* observations, if they had been to a *common learned* reader, there had been often room for divers pieces of theology dispersed in Latin and Greek authors, and fathers of the Church, but *your own most choice* and able store cannot but furnish you with whatever is fit that way to be thought. Whatever I have here collected, I consecrate to your love, and end with hope of your *instructing judgment*." vol. iv. fol. p. 1691.

Digitized by Google

never (unless peculiarly called upon) had recourse to the press afterwards. The second folio is a wretched continuation of the first, printed from MSS. surreptitiously obtained, during his life, or ignorantly hurried through the press after his death. It bears a variety of dates from 1631 to 1641 inclusive. It is probable that he looked forward to a period of retirement and ease, when he might be enabled to collect, revise, and publish his works at leisure; but the loss of all his MSS. by fire, and the fatal illness which almost immediately afterwards seized him, rendered all such views abortive. It is remarkable that he calls his Epigrams "Book the first:" he had, therefore, others in his hand; but they have perished.

Shakspeare died this year: what the world lost by that event need not be told; Jonson (the commentators assure us) was freed by it from a man whom he "hated and feared through life." He had not however much leisure to enjoy his good fortune; for "such was the *enviousness* of his disposition, that he immediately became jealous of Chapman, who *now began to grow* into reputation, and being, by the death of Shakspeare, left without a rival, strove to continue so, and endeavoured to suppress as much as possible the *rising* fame of his friend"! This medley of malice and stupidity is taken from the *Bio. Dram.* At the period of Shakspeare's death, Chapman had nearly reached his grand climacteric, and, with the exception of one or two pieces, had written the *whole* of his dramatic works; yet this is the reverend youth who "now began to grow into fame," and to excite the jealousy of Jonson! The reader supposes, perhaps, that I have discovered these facts in some "rare MS. *penes me;*" to the disgrace of literature,[9] they are to be found on *the very*

[9] I have said nothing of the biographers:—to suppose, indeed,

Digitized by Google

page which furnished the abuse of Jonson! But we have not yet done with this momentous period. Shakspeare, as we know from the authority of Mr. Malone, (enforced in a hundred places,) was persecuted by Jonson during his life with unceasing malevolence. While I was engaged on these pages, a letter of that gentleman to the Rev. Mr. Whalley, was put into my hands by Mr. Waldron, of which the following is a copy.

"SIR,

Having been out of town for some days; I did not receive your favour till last night. I shall with great pleasure add my mite of contribution to your new edition of Ben Jonson, though I have very little hopes of being able to throw any light on what has eluded your researches. At the same time I must honestly own to you that I have never read old Ben's plays with any degree of attention, and that he is an author so little to my taste that I have no pleasure in perusing him. However, as I have just said, you may command, sir, my best services, whenever the volumes are put into my hands: they are at present, I believe, in the possession of Mr. Reed. I agree with you entirely that no ridicule was intended against Shakspeare in the *Poetaster* for the use of the word *clutch*, or in the *Case is Altered*, for the *white of an egg;* nor against his *hot and moist* in *Othello*. Before I was honoured with your letter, I had observed in a little work of mine that is now in the press, (A Second Appendix to my Supplement to Shakspeare,) that the dates of the respective pieces refute the idea of his sneering at Shakspeare, in these places. And, indeed, I believe that even in those plays of his or Fletcher's, where a direct parody appears, no ridicule may possibly have been intended. But notwithstanding this, I think I have brought together decisive proofs of Jonson's malignity and jealousy of Shakspeare. The *Return from Parnassus* shews they were at variance so early as 1602, three years only after Shakspeare had patronized him by bringing *Every Man in his Humour* on the stage. In the prologue to that piece his *Winter Tale* is, I think, evidently ridiculed.

---

that Mr. Stephen Jones should notice an error, *though as wide as a church door*, would be to equal him in folly. Better optics than his, (see the *Theatrum Poetarum*, p. 252,) when Jonson is concerned, "don't" (as Bustapha well observes,) "know a lie when they see it."

Digitized by Google

This had always puzzled me, and I conjectured that this prologue was not spoken originally, but added at a subsequent period. On looking into the 4to edit. which has lately fallen into my hands, I find my conjecture confirmed. *This* certainly, as well as the torrent of ridicule thrown out in *B. Fair* in 1614, adds great strength to your supposition that old Ben's jealousy did not display itself with full force till Shakspeare retired from the stage.

Queen Anne Street East,
Dec. 28, 1782."

The case of our author is thus rendered worse than ever! it now appears that so far from being relieved by the retirement of Shakspeare, his *jealousy* did not break out in full force till that event took place; and, as he was besides, tormented by the "rising fame of a new competitor," his situation can scarcely be contemplated without dismay. The reader, who has seen that he was of a disposition to stem the torrent of ill fortune, will be naturally anxious to learn by what extraordinary exertions of dramatic power he was enabled to overcome at once his "jealousy" of Shakspeare, and his "fear" of Chapman. Comedy after comedy, he will imagine, was now brought forward with a rapidity unknown before, teeming, in every act, with the most pointed ridicule, the most envenomed malignity. I anticipate his surprise, therefore, when he hears from me the simple fact—that for the long period of ten years from the "death" of Shakspeare and the "rise" of Chapman, Jonson DID NOT WRITE ONE LINE FOR THE STAGE! But this surprise will be converted into scorn and indignation against his base calumniators when he further hears, that, during the same period, in which he is accused of such active malevolence against both, the only memorials of it to be found are, 1st, the pleasing lines under the print of Shakspeare, and the generous burst of affection on his death; and, 2dly, a viva voce declaration to Drummond, that "he *loved* Chapman," and a most kind

Digitized by Google

and complimentary address to him on the completion of his Translation of Hesiod![1] [A date is the spear of Ithuriel to the enemies of Jonson. Touch their "facts" with it, and they start up in loathsome and revolting deformity.]

The kindness of James for our poet, which seems to have progressively increased, was this year manifested by a very substantial act of beneficence. In consideration of his services, he conferred on him, by letters patent, a pension for life of a hundred marks. In courtesy, this has been termed creating him Poet Laureat; and, perhaps, it was so.[2] Hitherto,

[1] As there is not a word of our author respecting Chapman that does not breathe love and esteem for him, the reader may be pleased to see the return to it. "An Invective against Ben Johnson by Mr. George Chapman:"

> "Greate-learned wittie Ben, be pleasde to light
> The world with that three-forked fire; nor fright
> All us, the sublearn'd with luciferus boast
> That thou art most great, learnd—of all the earth
> As being a thing betwixt a humane birth
> And an infernall; no humanytie
> Of the divine soul shewing man in thee," &c.
>
> *Ashmole MSS.*

Chapman (whom I am unwilling to believe guilty of this malicious trash) died, I fear, poor and neglected. In another poem among the Ashmole papers, inscribed "The Genius of the Stage deploring the death of Ben Jonson:" after noticing the general sorrow, the writer says,

> ——— "Why do Apollo's sons
> Meet in such throngs, and whisper as they go?—
> There are no more by sad affliction hurl'd,
> And friend's neglect, from this inconstant world!
> Chapman alone went so: He that's now gone,
> Commands his tomb; he, scarce a grave or stone."

[2] The attachment of James to our author, is thus noticed by lord Falkland, in an allusion to the circumstance before us. Dorus, he says, would tell how learned James,

> "Who favoured quiet, and the arts of peace,
> Which, in his halcyon days, found large increase,

Digitized by Google

the laureatship appears to have been a mere title, adopted at pleasure by those who were employed to write for the court, but conveying no privileges, and establishing no claim to a salary.[3] Occasional gra-

> Friend to the humblest, if deserving, swain,
> Who was himself a part of Phœbus' train,
> Declared great JONSON worthiest to receive
> The garland which the Muses' hands did weave:
> And though his bounty did sustain his days,
> Gave a more welcome pension in his praise."

"Of all literary tastes (says Mr. Dibdin) James had the most strange and sterile." He probably thought that there was something more valuable in *literature* than an uncut catalogue on large paper, and thus far, perhaps, differed from the critic: in other respects, James cannot be said to evince much singularity of taste; but it is with this poor prince, as with Falstaff, "men of all sorts take a pride to gird at him." There seems no necessity for this. If James was not a wise man, he was very far, indeed, from being a fool; which is more, perhaps, than can be said of some of his persecutors. "James," says Mr. D'Israeli, who had just risen from an examination of his works, "was no more a pedant than the ablest of his contemporaries; nor abhorred the taste of tobacco, nor feared witches, more than they did: he was a great wit, a most acute disputant," &c. *Calam. of Authors*, vol. ii. 245. All this is simple truth; and it is mere dotage to re-echo, at this day, the senseless and savage yell of the nonconformists of James's time. They thirsted for blood; and their rage was kindled against him because his good fortune or his good sense kept him from rushing into a continental war, for which he had neither men nor money; and which, therefore, by involving him in difficulties, would, as they well knew, leave him at their mercy, and thus accelerate that overthrow of the Church and State, for which they so eagerly panted.

[3] Jonson, who was never satisfied without procuring all possible information upon every subject in which he was interested, appears, on this occasion, to have applied to Selden, for assistance in his researches; and Selden, who always found a singular pleasure in gratifying him, drew up expressly, and introduced into the second part of his learned work, *Titles of Honour*, a long chapter (the forty-third) "on the custom of giving crowns of laurel to poets." At the conclusion of which, he says, "Thus have I, by no unseasonable digression, performed a promise to you, my beloved Ben Jonson. Your curious learning and judgment may correct where I have

Digitized by Google

tuities were undoubtedly bestowed on occasional services; but an annual and determinate sum seems to have been issued, for the first time, in favour of Jonson. The nominal laureat or court poet, when our author first came into notice, was Daniel, who was long the favourite of Elizabeth and her ladies, and who did not witness the growing popularity of the youthful bard, or hear of his being called upon for those Entertainments which he probably considered as within his own province, with very commendable fortitude. It is a subject of sincere regret that many of the latter days of this amiable poet, and virtuous man, should be overcast with unavailing gloom on this account, and that he should indulge any feeling of resentment against one, who took no undue course to secure the favour from which he had apparently fallen. On the regular appointment of Jonson, Daniel withdrew himself entirely from court. He died about three years afterwards, beloved, honoured, and lamented.[4]

erred, and add where my notes and memory have left me short. You are

——— omnia carmina doctus,
Et calles mythωn plasmata et historiam.

And so you both fully know what concerns it, and your singular excellency in the art most eminently deserves it."

(4) That Jonson's conduct towards Daniel had always been perfectly honourable, may be collected from many quarters. The celebrated John Florio (author of the *Dict. Ital.*) was brother-in-law to Daniel, and apparently much attached to his interests; yet he always lived on terms of great friendship with our author. In his Majesty's Library is a very beautiful copy of *The Fox*, which once belonged to Florio, with the following autograph of the poet: "To his loving Father and worthy friend, master John Florio, Ben Jonson seals this testimony of his friendship and love."

Sir Tobie Mathews has preserved a letter of Jonson's:—It is an answer to Donne, who had besought him (doubtless on prudential motives) to abstain from justifying himself against some false charge. No name is given; but I am inclined to think that the

Digitized by Google

We now approach the most unfortunate period of our author's life. In consequence of a warm invitation to Scotland, where he had many friends, espe-

person alluded to in the letter was Lucy, countess of Bedford. She had certainly been, at one time, ill disposed towards our author; and, as it would appear, by the unhappy jealousy of Daniel, whom, as well as Donne, she warmly patronized. In the Epistle to the countess of Rutland, there is an allusion to something of this kind;—but whatever be the cause, the letter is honourable to the poet's feelings.

If this lady was meant, she was not long in discovering that Jonson had been calumniated. A steady friendship grew between them; she shewed him many marks of favour, and he wrote some beautiful verses in her praise.

SIR,

You cannot but believe how dear and reverend your friendship is to me, (though all testimony on my part hath been too short to express me,) and therefore would I meet it with all obedience. My mind is not yet so deafened by injuries, but it hath an ear for counsel. Yet in this point that you presently dissuade, I wonder how I am misunderstood; or that you should call that an imaginary right, which is the proper justice that every clear man owes to his innocency. Exasperations I intend none, for truth cannot be sharp but to ill natures, or such weak ones whom the ill spirits suspicion, or credulity still possess. My lady may believe whisperings, receive tales, suspect and condemn my honesty, and I may not answer, on the pain of losing her! as if she, who had this prejudice of me, were not already lost!—O no, she will do me no hurt, she will think and speak well of my faculties.—She cannot there judge me; or if she could, I would exchange all glory (if I had all men's abilities) which could come that way, for honest simplicity.—But there is a greater penalty threatened, the loss of you, my true friend; for others I reckon not, who were never had, You have so subscribed yourself. Alas! how easy is a man accused that is forsaken of defence!—Well, my modesty shall sit down, and (let the world call it guilt or what it will) I will yet thank you that counsel me to a silence in these oppressures, when confidence in my right, and friends may abandon me. And lest yourself may undergo some hazard, for my questioned reputation, and draw jealousies or hatred upon you, I desire to be left to mine own innocence, which shall acquit me, or heaven shall be guilty.

Your ever true lover,

BEN JONSON.

Digitized by Google

cially among the connexions of the duke of Lenox, he determined, in the summer of this year, (1618) to pay a visit to that country. His journey was made on foot, and he appears to have spent several months with the nobility and gentry in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. "At Leith (says Taylor, the water-poet) I found my long-approved and assured good friend, master Benjamin Jonson, at one master John Stuart's house. I thank him for his great kindness; for, at my taking leave of him, he gave me a piece of gold of two and twenty shillings value to drink his health in England:[5] and withall willed me to remember his kind commendations to all his friends. So with a friendly farewell, I left him as well as I hope never to see him in a worse estate; for he is among noblemen and gentlemen that know his true worth and their own honours, where with much re-

[5] This was a considerable present; but Jonson's hand and heart were ever open to his acquaintance. All his pleasures were social; and while health and fortune smiled upon him, he was no niggard either of his time or his talents to those who needed them. There is something striking in Taylor's concluding sentence, when the result of the visit to Drummond is considered:—but there is one *evil that walks*, which keener eyes than John's have often failed to discover.

Taylor's "Pennyless Pilgrimage" to Scotland gave rise to some ridiculous reports, and it is curious to see with what a serious air he sets about refuting them. "Many shallow-brained critics (he says) do lay an aspersion on me—that I was set on by others, or did undergoe this project, either in malice or mockage of master Benjamin Jonson. I vow, by the faith of a Christian, that their imaginations are all wide; for He is a gentleman to whom I am so much obliged for many undeserved courtesies that I have received from him, and from others, *by his favour*, that I durst never be so impudent or ingrateful as to suffer any man's persuasions or mine own instigation, to incite me to make so bad a requital for so much goodness."

I have only to add, in justice to this honest man, that his gratitude outlived the subject of it. He paid the tribute of a verse to his benefactor's memory;—the verse, indeed, was mean; but poor Taylor had nothing better to give.

Digitized by Google

spective (respectful) love he is entertained." This was about the 20th of September. Jonson probably paid many other visits; but he reserved the last of them for Mr. William Drummond, the poet of Hawthornden, with whom he passed the greater part of the month of April, 1619.

It is not known at what period, or in what manner, Jonson's acquaintance with Drummond began; but the ardour with which he cherished his friendship is almost unexampled: he seems, upon every occasion, to labour for language to express his grateful sense of it; and very depraved must have been the mind, that could witness such effusions of tenderness with a determination to watch the softest moment, and betray the confidence of his guest. For this perfidious purpose no one ever afforded greater facilities than Jonson. He *wore his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at:* a bird of prey, therefore, like Drummond, had a noble quarry before him; and he could strike at it without stooping.

It is much to be lamented that our author did not fall into kindly hands. His learning, his judgment, his love of anecdote, his extensive acquaintance with the poets, statesmen, and eminent characters of the age, of whom he talked without reserve, would have rendered his conversations, had they been recorded with such a decent respect for the characters of the living as courtesy demanded, the most valuable body of contemporary criticism that had ever appeared. Such was not Drummond's object. He only sought to injure the man whom he had decoyed under his roof; and he therefore gave his remarks in rude and naked deformity. Even thus, however, without one qualifying word, without one introductory or explanatory line, there is little in them that can be disputed; while the vigour, perspicuity, and integrity of judgment which they uniformly display are

Digitized by Google

certainly worthy of commendation. As these "Conversations" form the text from which our author's enemies draw their topics of abuse, and as they have hitherto been unfairly quoted,[6] I subjoin a faithful copy of the criticisms, from the old folio. What relates to our author's personal history, has been already given.

"HEADS OF A CONVERSATION, *&c.*

"Ben Johnson used to say, that many Epigrams were ill, because they expressed in the end what should have been understood, by what was said before, as that of sir John Davies. That he had a pastoral intitled the *May Lord;* his own name is Alkin, Ethra the countess of Bedford, Mogbel Overbury, the old countess of Suffolk, an enchantress; other names are given to Somerset, his lady, Pembroke, the countess of Rutland, lady Wroth. In his first scene Alkin comes in mending his broken pipe. [*He bringeth in*, says our author (Drummond) *clowns making mirth and foolish sports, contrary to all other pastorals.*] He had also a design to write a Fisher or Pastoral (Piscatory ?) play, and make the stage of it in the Lomond lake; and also to write his foot-pilgrimage hither and to call it a Discovery. In a poem, he called Edinburgh

"The Heart of Scotland, Britain's other Eye."

That he had an intention to have made a play like Plautus's *Amphytruo*, but left it off, for that he could never find two so like one to the other, that he could persuade the spectator that they were one.

"That he had a design to write an epic poem, and was to call it *Chorologia* of the Worthies of his

[6] They have, without any exception, been taken from Cibber's Lives of the Poets.

Digitized by Google

country, raised by Fame, and was to dedicate it to his country: it is all in couplets, for he detested all other rhymes. He said, he had written a *Discourse of Poetry*, both against Campion and Daniel, especially the last, where he proves couplets to be the best sort of verses, especially when they are broke like hexameters, and that cross rhymes and stanzas, because the purpose would lead beyond eight lines, were all forced.

"His censure (judgment) of the English poets was this: that Sidney did not keep a decorum in making every one speak as well as himself. Spencer's stanza pleased him not, nor his matter; the meaning of the Allegory of his *Fairy Queen* he had delivered in writing to sir Walter Raleigh, which was, that by the bleating (blatant) beast, he understood the Puritans, and by the false Duessa, the queen of Scots. He told, that Spenser's goods were robbed by the Irish, and his house and a little child burnt, he and his wife escaped, and after died for want of bread in King-street: he refused twenty pieces sent him by my lord Essex, and said he was sure he had no time to spend them. Samuel Daniel was a good, honest man, had no children, and was no poet;[7] and that he had wrote the *Civil Wars*, and yet had not one battle in all his book. That Michael Drayton's *Polyolbion*, if he had performed what he promised, to write the deeds of all the Worthies, had been excellent. That he was challenged for intituling one book *Mortimeriades:* that sir John Davies played on Drayton in an epigram, who, in his sonnet, concluded his mistress might have been the ninth Worthy, and said, he used a

[7] Jonson explains himself in what he says below of Du Bartas—"He was no poet, but a verser, *because he wrote not fiction.*" The allusion is to Daniel's narrative poem of the *Civil Wars*. He elsewhere expressly styles Daniel a *verser* in this sense.

Digitized by Google

phrase like Dametas in *Arcadia*, who said his mistress for wit might be a giant.

That Silvester's translation of Du Bartas was not well done; and that he wrote his verses before he understood to confer; and these of Fairfax were not good. That the translations of Homer and Virgil in long Alexandrines, were but prose.[8] That sir John Harington's *Ariosto*, under all translations, was the worst: that when sir John desired him to tell the truth of his Epigrams, he answered him, that he loved not the truth, for they were narrations, not epigrams. He said Donne was originally a poet, his grandfather on the mother side was Heywood the epigrammatist: that Donne for want of being understood would perish. He esteemed him the first poet in the world for some things; his verses of the lost Orchadine he had by heart, and that passage of the Calm, "that dust and feathers did not stir, all was so quiet." He affirmed that Donne wrote all his best pieces before he was twenty-five years of age: the conceit of Donne's Transformation, or Μετεμψυχωσις, was that he sought the soul of that apple, which Eve pulled, and thereafter made it the soul of a bitch, then of a she-wolf, and so of a woman: his general purpose was to have brought it into all the bodies of the heretics from the soul of Cain, and at last left it in the body of Calvin. He only wrote one sheet of this, and since he was made a Doctor, repented hugely, and resolved to destroy

[8] So Daniel in his answer to Campion:—"I find my Homer-Lucan, as if he gloried to seem to have no bounds, passing over the rhyme, albeit he were confined within his measure, to be therein, in my conceit, most happy; for so thereby, they who care not for verse or rhyme, may pass it over without taking notice thereof, and please themselves with a well-measured *prose*." This is pretty nearly what Jonson means: and, indeed, had his remarks been given to us by any but an enemy, we should, I am convinced, have found little to qualify or correct in them.

Digitized by Google

all his poems. He told Donne that his *Anniversary* was profane and full of blasphemies; that if it had been written on the Virgin Mary it had been tolerable: to which Donne answered, that he described the idea of a woman, and not as she was. He said Shakspeare wanted art, and sometimes sense, for in one of his plays, he brought in a number of men saying they had suffered ship-wreck in Bohemia, where is no sea near by a hundred miles.[9] That sir Walter Raleigh esteemed more fame than conscience. The best wits in England were employed in making his History; Ben himself had written a piece to him of the Punick War, which he altered and set in his book.

He said there was no such ground for an Heroic Poem as king Arthur's fiction, and that sir P. Sidney had an intention to have transformed all his Arcadia to the stories of king Arthur. He said Owen was a poor pedantic schoolmaster, sweeping his living from the posteriors of little children, and had nothing good in him, his epigrams being bare narrations. Francis Beaumont died before he was thirty years of age, who, he said, was a good poet, as were Fletcher and Chapman, whom he loved. That sir William Alexander was not half kind to him, and neglected him, because a friend to Drayton: that sir R. Ayrton loved him dearly.[1] He fought several

[9] This is the tritest of all our author's observations. No one ever read the play without noticing the "absurdity," as Dr. Johnson calls it; yet for this simple *truism*, for this casual remark in the freedom of conversation, Jonson is held up to the indignation of the world, as if the blunder was invisible to all but himself, or as if he had uttered the most deliberate, and spiteful calumny!

[1] "He was (Aubrey says) according to Mr. J. Dryden, who had seen his verses in MS. one of the best poets of his time. He was acquainted with all the witts (learned men) of his time in England. Mr. Thomas Hobbes of Malmbury told me he made use of him, together with Ben Jonson, for an Aristarchus, when he drew up the

Digitized by Google

times with Marston; and says, that Marston wrote his father-in-law's preachings, and his father-in-law his comedies."[2]

Such are the remarks of Jonson on his contemporaries: set down in malice, abridged without judgment, and published without shame, what is there yet in them to justify the obloquy with which they are constantly assailed, or to support the malicious conclusions drawn from them by Drummond? Or who, that leaned with such confidence on the bosom of a beloved friend, who treacherously encouraged the credulous affection — would have passed the ordeal with more honour than Jonson? — But to proceed.

"His judgment of stranger poets was, That he thought not Bartas a poet, but a verser, because he wrote not fiction. He cursed Petrarch for redacting verses into sonnets, which he said was like that tyrant's bed, where some who were too short, were racked, others too long cut short. That Guarini in

Epistle Dedicatory for his translation of Thucydides." *Letters*, &c. vol. ii. p. 200.

[2] The petty contentions in which Jonson was involved by the captiousness of Marston, have been already noticed. What follows seems a humorous allusion to the sombre air of Marston's comedies, as contrasted with the cheerful tone of his father-in-law's discourses:—But who was this father-in-law? Nay, who was Marston? None of his biographers know any thing of either; and yet it appears to me that something on the subject of both has been, unconsciously, delivered by Wood. William Wilkes, he tells us, was chaplain to king James, before whom he often preached to his great content. This person "died at Barford S. Martin in Wiltshire, of which he was rector, leaving a daughter named Mary, who was married to John Marston, of the city of Coventry, gentleman. Which John dying 25 June 1634, was buried in the church belonging to the Temple in London, near to the body of John Marston his father, sometimes a counsellor of the Middle Temple." I flatter myself that I have here recovered both father and son, since all that is known of the latter corresponds with these particulars.

Digitized by Google

his *Pastor Fido* kept no decorum in making shepherds speak as well as himself. That he told cardinal du Perron (when he was in France, 1613) who shewed him his translation of Virgil, that it was naught: that the best pieces of Ronsard were his Odes. [*But all this was to no purpose*, (says our author) *for he never understood the French or Italian languages.*[3]] He said Petronius, Plinius Secundus, and Plautus spoke best Latin; and that Tacitus wrote the secrets of the council and senate, as Suetonius did those of the cabinet and court: that Lucan, taken in parts, was excellent, but altogether, naught: that Quintilian's 6, 7, and 8 books were not only to be read, but altogether digested: that Juvenal, Horace, and Martial were to be read for delight, and so was Pindar; but Hippocrates for health.

Of the English nation he said, that Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* was best for church-matters, and Selden's *Titles of Honour* for antiquities.—Here our author relates that the censure (judgment) of his verses was—That they were all good, especially his Epitaph on prince Henry,[4] save that they smelled too much of the schools, and were not after the fancy

[3] It is observable that every addition by Drummond is tinctured with spleen: What a tissue of malevolence must the original record of these conversations have been! When Jonson says that he wrote his praise of Sylvester before he was able to compare the translation with the original, and, fifteen years afterwards, declares that he was wrong, I should conceive, without more authority, that he had made himself master of French in the interval. There can, indeed, be no doubt of it; (Drummond's assertion goes for nothing) for he hardly conversed with cardinal du Perron on the merits of French poetry without understanding the language. In fact, so common an acquirement was not a matter of boast, especially in one so much about the court as Jonson, and in the habit of hearing it spoken by almost every one around him.

[4] "Tears on the Death of Meliades." *Drum. Poems*, folio, p. 15.

Digitized by Google

of the times: for a child, says he, may write after the fashion of the Greek and Latin verse in running; yet that he wished for pleasing the king, that piece of *Forth Feasting* had been his own."

"As Ben Jonson (say the collectors of Drummond's works,) has been very liberal of his censures (opinions) on all his contemporaries, so our author *does not spare* him."—

But Jonson's censures are merely critical, or, if the reader pleases, hypercritical: and with the exception of Raleigh, who is simply charged with taking credit to himself for the labours of others, he belies no man's reputation, blasts no man's moral character—the apology for the slander of his host, therefore,

——who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife himself,—

is weaker than water.

"—For he says, Ben Johnson was a great lover and praiser of himself, a contemner and scorner of others, given rather to lose a friend than a jest, jealous of every word and action of those about him, especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he lived: a dissembler of the parts which reign in him; a bragger of some good that he wanted; thinketh nothing well done but what either he himself or some of his friends have said or done. He is passionately kind and angry, careless either to gain or keep; vindictive, but if he be well answered, at himself; interprets best sayings and deeds often to the worst. He was for any religion, as being versed in both;[5]

[5] To attempt a refutation of the absurd abuse poured on Jonson by this cankered hypocrite, would be useless, as the history of the poet's whole life is a refutation of it: but it may not be amiss to call the attention of the reader to this passage, of which the logic is only to be equalled by the candour—"He was well versed in theology, *therefore* he was without religion!" What religion Drum-

Digitized by Google

oppressed with fancy which hath overmastered his reason, a *general* disease in *many* poets: his inventions are smooth and easy, but above all he excelleth in a translation.[6] When the play of the *Silent Woman* was first acted, there were found verses after [illegible] the stage against him, concluding that that play was well named the *Silent Woman*, because there was never one *man* to say Plaudite to it." *Drum. Works*, folio, 1711, p. 224-6.

mond was "versed" in, I know not:—certainly, not in that which says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

[6] In this place Shiels interpolated the scurrilous passage already given (p. xl.) I am not sure that Drummond himself is not indebted for some of his popularity to this forged panegyric on Shakspeare at the cost of Jonson, which is quoted with such delight by all that poet's biographers.

It may not be amiss, however, to observe that Drummond appears to have known or thought as little of Shakspeare as of any writer of the time. He never mentions him but once.—To afford an opportunity of contrasting the "censures" of Ben with those of a master hand, his editors kindly subjoin to the passage quoted above, "Mr. Drummond's character of several authors."

"The authors I have seen," saith he, "on the subject of love are—Sidney, Daniel, Drayton, Spenser,—the last we have are sir W. Alexander and Shakspeare, who have lately published their works."—folio, p. 226. Not a word more of the latter, though he recurs to Alexander, (whom he places next to Petrarch,) to Daniel, Drayton, Donne, Sylvester and others. Such is his "character" of Shakspeare! In his letters several poets are mentioned, and notices of plays occasionally occur; but of Shakspeare's not a syllable. I much question whether Drummond ever read a play of our great poet. That he had no esteem for his writings is tolerably clear; as it is, that he preferred the dull and lifeless Alexander to him.

About the year 1627 Drummond gave "a noble present of books and manuscripts to the college of Edinburgh."—So say the editors of his works, (folio, 1711) or I should have termed it, generally speaking, a collection of rubbish not worth the hire of the cart that took it away. Of this rare present a catalogue was published, in which the books are carefully arranged under the names of their respective authors. Under that of "William Shakspeare" there appears—what, does the reader think?—*Love's Labour Lost.*

Digitized by Google

The writers of Jonson's life in the *Bio. Brit.* after selecting the most envenomed passages of the "Conversations," (always, however, with due admiration of the exemplary friendship of Drummond,) proceed thus: "In short (adds Drummond, folio, 1711, p. 222,) Jonson was," &c. Overcome by the tender enthusiasm of this exquisite burst of friendship, the biographers indulge in a beatific vision of our author's happiness. "He passed," they say, "some months [7] with this favourite brother poet, this *ingenuous friend*, to whom he opened his heart with a most unreserved freedom, and confidence, the *sweetest gift* of friendship"! It would appear, that in the case of Jonson, words and actions lost their usual import, and that the blackest perfidy, when directed against him, suddenly changed into kindness and liberality.

The words put into Drummond's mouth, do not, indeed, belong to him;—Of this, however, the critics, who trusted merely to Shiels, and quote a work which they never saw, were ignorant.—No matter: there is still enough to justify the rhapsody on the "sweets of friendship"!—It must not be concealed, however, that there have been persons free enough to question the purity of Drummond's conduct, and that even the wretched scribbler who interpolated the passage, cannot avoid saying, "We have inserted Ben's conversations—though, perhaps, it was not altogether fair of Mr. Drummond to commit to writing things that passed over a bottle, and which perhaps were heedlessly advanced. As few people

[7] *He passed some months.*] This is for ever repeated; although the persons who had the care of Drummond's papers and who drew up the account of his life, expressly say, that Jonson staid with him about *three weeks!* He arrived (p. ci.) at Hawthornden in the beginning of April, 1619, and left it, on his return to London, about the end of the same month.

Digitized by Google

are so wise as not to speak imprudently sometimes, it is not the part of a man who invites another to his table to expose what may drop inadvertently." *Cib. Lives*, vol. i. p. 310. This gentle reproof from Lauder the second, is extremely pleasant!—perhaps, it was a *compunctious visiting*. Mr. A. Chalmers too, has an awkward observation.—Drummond's return (he says) to the unreserved conduct of Jonson "has been thought *not very liberal*."[8] Is it possible! Fie, fie!—"Not *very* liberal"! To do Mr. Chalmers justice, he has no doubts of this kind, himself; in tenderness, however, to those who have, he suggests "that this *suspicion* of illiberality is considerably lessened, when we reflect that Drummond appears not to have intended to publish his remarks," &c.[9] Mr. Chalmers never heard, perhaps, of a legacy of half-a-crown left to a hungry Scotsman to fire off a pistol which the ruffian, who loaded and levelled it, had not the courage to discharge. At any rate he seems to think that there is nothing unusual or improper in framing a libellous attack on the character and reputation of a friend, keeping it carefully in store for thirty years, and finally bequeathing it, fairly engrossed, to the caprice or cupidity of an executor!

The parting scene at Hawthornden was undoubtedly tender; for Drummond, who had hitherto concealed his malice, was too practised an *artificer of fraud*, to pull off the mask at such a moment. Ben,

[8] Full justice will not be done to the niceness of Mr. Chalmers's feelings, on this point, unless we call to mind that he expressly includes the ribaldry of Shiels in Drummond's sketch of Jonson's character.

[9] I will help Mr. Chalmers to Chetwood's opinion on the subject: "This false friend (Drummond) durst not have declared his vile sentiments had our author been alive to answer him; I look, therefore, upon all that he has brought against him, as the malice and envy of a bad heart." *Life of Jonson*, p. 55.

Digitized by Google

therefore, who saw no more than his enemies were pleased to expose to his view, went on his way with a heart overflowing with respect and gratitude, while his host, with a hand yet warm from the pressure of affection, retired to his closet, and having thanked God that he was not a "drunkard," a "dissembler," a "braggard," *as other men* were, or even one "that interpreted best deeds and sayings to the worst," *like this Jonson*, sat complacently down to destroy his character (as he fondly hoped) for ever.

Jonson reached London in the beginning of May, and soon after dispatched the following letter:—

"To my worthy, honoured, and beloved friend,
Mr. W. Drummond.

"Most loving" (poor Jonson!) "and beloved sir, against which titles I should most knowingly offend, if I made you not some account of myself, to come even with your friendship. I am arrived safely, with a most catholic welcome, and my reports not unacceptable to his Majesty. He professed (thank God) some joy to see me, and is pleased to hear of the purpose of my book:[1] to which I most earnestly solicit you for your promise of the inscriptions at Pinky, some things concerning the Loch of Lomond, touching the government of Edinburgh, to urge Mr. James Scot, and what else you can procure for me

[1] The "Discovery," (p. cii.) which was to contain the Description of Scotland, with the Episode of his "Journey thither," &c. This passage is worthy of notice, as it incidentally shews the estimation in which Jonson was held by James. Those who so readily condemn him to poverty and obscurity are little aware, perhaps, that for the space of twenty years, he was associated with all that was noble, or great, or virtuous, or wise:—The implicit believers in the commentators on our great poet, are in too forlorn a state of imbecility to encourage any hopes of returning reason; but there are others who may one day be expected to discover that there are better authorities for a Life of Jonson than captain Tucca, Will. Kempe, and Shiels, the Scotsman.

Digitized by Google

with all speed—though these requests be full of trouble, I hope they shall neither burthen nor weary such a friendship, whose commands to me, I, will ever interpret a pleasure. News we have none here, but what is making against the Queen's funeral,[2] whereof I have somewhat in hand which shall look upon you with the next. Salute the beloved Fentons, the Nisbets, the Scots, the Levingstons, and all the honest and honoured names with you, especially Mr. James Wroth, his wife, your sister, &c. And if you forget yourself, you believe not in

your most true Friend and Lover,

BEN JONSON.

London, May 10, 1619."

The answer to this does not appear; but a second letter which Drummond sent in consequence of another application from our author, begins thus:—

"Worthy Friend,

"The uncertainty of your abode was the cause of my silence—I have adventured this packet upon hopes that a man so famous cannot be in any place either of the city or court,[3] where he shall not be found out. In my last (the missing letter) I sent you a description of Loch Lomond, with a map of Inch-merionach, which may, by your book, be made most famous, &c.——

July 1, 1619."

We hear nothing further of Drummond till the end of this year, when he addressed another letter "to his worthy friend, master Ben Jonson."

[2] Ann died in March. The poem which Jonson wrote on the occasion, is lost.

[3] Jonson had left London towards the end of May, and was, at this time, residing at Christ Church, Oxford, with his true friend, Corbet (afterwards bishop of Norwich) and others of that College.

Digitized by Google

"Sir,

"Here you have that Epigram which you desired (vol. viii. p. 310) with another of the like argument. If there be any other thing in this country which my power can reach, command it; there *is nothing I wish more than to be in the catalogue of them that love you.*[4] I have heard from court that the late Masque[5] was not so approved of the King, as in former times, and that your absence was regretted. Such applause *hath true worth* even of those who are otherwise not for it. Thus, to the next occasion, taking my leave, I remain

your *loving Friend*,

W. D."

Enough of Drummond, with whose "friendship" for our author, the common sense of the reader will, I trust, be no longer insulted, except from the lips of hopeless idiotism—*longa manantia labra saliva.*

"Crowned with the favour of his sovereign, Jonson saw (say the writers of the *Bio. Brit.*) the most distinguished wits of his time crowding his train, and courting his acquaintance; and in this spirit he was invited to Christ Church by Dr. Corbet, then senior student of that college."[6] Here Wood tells

[4] Hypocrite to the last! What, the "liar," the "drunkard," the "atheist"! This is almost too much. A voluntary plunge in infamy was by no means necessary here: it was not your credulous correspondent (whoever else it might be) that "interpreted best sayings and deeds to the worst."

[5] I know not who was called in to supply the place of Jonson during his northern tour. The king was grown somewhat fastidious perhaps after those exquisite Entertainments, the *Vision of Delight*, and *Pleasure reconciled to Virtue;* and talents of no ordinary kind might have fallen short of their excellencies, without much injury to the possessor's reputation.

[6] "Thus," exclaims Mr. Headley, "Jonson was rescued from the arms of a sister University who had long treated the Muses with indignity. We do not find that Ben expressed any regret at the

Digitized by Google

us, he continued some time writing and composing of plays, and was created Master of Arts (July 19)

change of situation: companions whose minds and pursuits were similar to his own were not always to be found in the gross atmosphere of the muddy Cam, though easily met with on the more genial banks of the Isis." *Beauties of English Poetry*, p. xxxviii. Mr. Headley was an ingenious young man; but like other ingenious young men, talked sometimes of what he did not understand. He is so ignorant of Jonson's history as to suppose that he was then resident at Cambridge—this, however, may be easily overlooked; but his attempt to implicate the poet in his personal quarrels, in his splenetic and vulgar abuse of Cambridge, merits castigation. Jonson neither felt nor expressed any disrespect to Cambridge.—In the Dedication of the *Fox* to both Universities, he calls them "most noble and most equal sisters;" and mentions, in terms of respectful gratitude, his obligations to their "favour and affection." From this language he never varied; and, unfortunately for Mr. Headley, Cambridge, which had also conferred on him a Master of Arts degree, was fondly remembered by him to the last.*

This critic, as might reasonably be expected, entertains a supreme contempt for Jonson's writings, of which he manifests a surprising knowledge! "While Drayton (he says) was adopting a style that the present age may peruse, &c. Jonson" (who is always the victim) "unable to digest the mass of his reading, peopled his pages with the heathen mythology," p. lii. Mr. Headley had evidently heard "of Jonson's learning;" the rest followed of course. But how stands the fact? That of all the writers for the stage, from old Heywood to sir Aston Cockayne inclusive; there is not one whose pages are so free from fable as Jonson's. I will venture to

* When Dr. Birch was writing the life of Jonson for the *Gen. Dict.* folio, 1738, he applied to a member of St. John's College for information respecting the residence of the poet, &c. This person procured several memoranda for his use, from the learned T. Baker, one of the fellows. The last of them runs thus: "Mr. Baker adds that there has always been a tradition handed down that he was of our college—The Registrar tells me that there are several books in our Library with Ben Jonson's name, given by him to the college; particularly an ancient edition of Aristotle's Works."

It is observable that this life of Jonson is entirely free from the deplorable raving about the poet's *envy*, &c. which disgraces all the subsequent accounts. Birch could not forge, and he would not calumniate.

Digitized by Google

1619. The historian is wrong in the first part of his assertion. Jonson certainly "composed" no plays at Oxford or elsewhere: this was a labour from which he always delighted to escape, and he was now in such a comparative state of affluence as to justify his indulging in pursuits more congenial to his feelings.[7] Several of his most beautiful Masques

affirm that more of the *heathen mythology* may be found in a single scene, nay, in a single speech, of Shakspeare, Fletcher, Massinger, and Shirley, than in the whole of Jonson's thirteen comedies. Nothing is so remarkable as his rigid exclusion of the deities of Greece and Rome. Neither as embellishments nor illustrations do they appear in his pages, yet Mr. Headley (and he is not singular, or I should have left him to his folly) assumes, as the distinguishing characteristic of the author, that *they are peopled with them!*

But Mr. Headley's candour is as conspicuous as his knowledge. "A strong and original vein of humour (he says) is Ben's *peculiar forte;* take away that, and he is undeserving of the fame he has attained"! *ibid.* It was well observed by the French tailor, upon the magnificent view from Richmond Hill—"All this is very fine, to be sure;—but take away the river and the trees, and it will be nothing"!

[7] "Both inclination and ambition (say the writers of the *Bio. Brit.*) concurred in prompting Jonson to turn from Masques and Entertainments to the graver and weightier works of the drama." This, (which is re-echoed by all his biographers,) like every thing else respecting him, is said at random. "Ambition" was on the side of the Masques—and with regard to his "inclination for the drama," he expressly declares that he had it not. These gentlemen, however, are so pleased with their observation, that they repeat it on the production of the *New Inn;* to the writing of which he was driven by absolute want. So much is said of our author, and so little known!

I have, on several occasions, noted the little pleasure which Jonson apparently took in writing for the stage; but I hardly expected so decisive a proof of it as has reached me since this note was put to the press. The ever active kindness of Mr. D'Israeli has just furnished me with the following letter. It was found among the Hatfield state papers by Dr. Birch, who was preparing a selection of them for the press, when he was interrupted by his last illness.

The letter is inscribed—"Ben Jonson to the Earl of Salisbury, praying his lordship's protection against some evil reports." It

Digitized by Google

were, however, composed about this period, both for the nobility and the court, as well as some of those pieces which are mentioned in the *Execration on Vulcan*, and which were destroyed together with his

shews (what indeed every circumstance of his life proves) that he was high-spirited, dauntless; confident in his worth, more confident in his innocence; complaining when wronged, with dignity, and soliciting when afflicted, with decorum.

The theatrical records of these times are so imperfect, that the circumstance and the play to which our author alludes, are equally obscure. It would seem that not long after his release, (in the beginning of 1605,) he was accused of reflecting on some one in a play written by Chapman and himself, and again imprisoned with his friend. It would be vain to indulge in farther conjecture. There are many points of similarity between the letter, and the dedication of the *Fox*, which may be consulted with advantage. The letter itself is truly admirable, and well deserved the success which, we know, from collateral circumstances, it instantly found. I rejoice in its preservation, and transcribe it with pleasure.

"1605.

"Most truly honourable,

"It hath still been the tyranny of my fortune so to oppress my endeavours that before I can shew myself grateful in the least for former benefits, I am enforced to provoke your bounties for more. May it not seem grievous to your lordship, that now my innocence calls upon you (next the deity) to her defence. God himself is not averted at just men's cries; and you that approach that divine goodness and supply it here on earth in your places and honours, cannot employ your aid more worthily than to the common succour of honesty and virtue, how humbly soever it be placed.

"I am here, my most honoured lord, unexamined and unheard, committed to a vile prison, and with me a gentleman, (whose name may, perhaps, have come to your lordship) one Mr. George Chapman, a learned and honest man. The cause (would I could name some worthier, though I wish we had known none worthy our imprisonment,) is (the words irk me that our fortune hath necessitated us to so despised a course,) a play, my lord; whereof we hope there is no man can justly complain that hath the virtue to think but favourably of himself, if our judge bring an equal ear: marry, if with prejudice we be made guilty afore our time, we must embrace the asinine virtue, patience. My noble lord, they deal not charitably who are witty in another man's works, and utter sometimes their own malicious meanings under our words. I protest to your

Digitized by Google

study. There perished his Commentary on the Poetics, his Grammar complete, of which we have now but the fragments, his Journey into Scotland, his May Lord and several other dramas. There too were lost the unfinished Life of Henry V.,[8] the Rape

honour, and call God to testimony, (since my first error,* which, yet, is punished in me more with my shame than it was then with my bondage,) I have so attempered my style, that I have given no cause to any good man of grief; and if to any ill, by touching at any general vice, it hath always been with a regard and sparing of particular persons. I may be otherwise reported; but if all that be accused should be presently guilty, there are few men would stand in the state of innocence.

"I beseech your most honourable lordship, suffer not other men's errors or faults past to be made my crimes; but let me be examined both by all my works past and this present; and not trust to rumour but my books (for she is an unjust deliverer both of great and of small actions) whether I have ever (many things I have written private or public) given offence to a nation, to a public order or state, or any person of honour or authority; but have equally laboured to keep their dignity as mine own person, safe. If others have transgressed, let me not be entitled to their follies. But lest in being too diligent for my excuse, I may incur the suspicion of being guilty, I become a most humble suitor to your lordship that with the honourable lord Chamberlain,† (to whom I have in like manner petitioned) you will be pleased to be the grateful means of our coming to answer; or if in your wisdoms it shall be thought necessary, that your lordship will be the most honoured cause of our liberty, where freeing us from one prison you will remove us to another; which is eternally to bind us and our muses to the thankful honouring of you and yours to posterity, as your own virtues have by many descents of ancestors ennobled you to time. Your honour's most devoted in heart as words,

BEN JONSON.

"To the most nobly virtuous and thrice honour'd earl of Salisbury. 1605."

[8] *Henry V.*] In this history, Jonson tells us in one of his most popular poems, he was assisted by Cotton, Carew, and Selden:

---

* In *Eastward hoe!* See p. lxxi.

† Thomas earl of Suffolk. Jonson was not unmindful of his kindness. See vol. viii. p. 180.

Digitized by Google

of Proserpine, the poem in celebration of the ladies of Great Britain, to which he more than once alludes, and what perhaps we ought to regret more than all, a vast body of philological collections, with notes, from the classics, the fruit of twenty years laborious study.

It is probable that Jonson spent much of his time at the country seats of the nobility and gentry, as he has allusions to several visits of this kind; and we know that he attended on the court in some of the royal progresses.[9] He was at Burleigh on the Hill, and at Belvoir Castle, and at Windsor when his Masque of the *Gipsies Metamorphosed* was performed at these places, respectively, and introduced several little compliments into the piece, as new candidates arrived, and claimed admission into the list of the *Dramatis Personæ*. He must also have been at Newmarket with the court, where his masques were occasionally represented.

While he was on these progresses, he obtained from his Majesty, who seems to have been unusually pleased with the *Masque of Gipsies*, in which he bore

Yet Mr. A. Chalmers gives this rare intelligence solely on the authority of Oldys! "See," he says, "Oldys's manuscript notes to Langbaine in *Brit. Mus.*"

[9] On one of these occasions he had an opportunity of serving Selden, who had grievously offended James by the indirect tendency of his arguments on the divine right of tythes. "The storm was blown over," his biographer says, "by the interest of his friend Ben Jonson, with the king." Fresh offence, however, was taken soon afterwards, and Selden was summoned to Theobalds, where his majesty then was, on his return from Newmarket. "Not being as yet acquainted with the court or with the king, he got master Ben Jonson, who was then at Theobalds, to introduce him." *Life of Selden.* The steadiness of our author's friendship calls for no remark; it was a part of his character: but it should not be omitted that Selden, who is expressly declared by his biographers, "to be, in 1618, *yet* unacquainted with the court," is said by all the writers of Jonson's life, to have procured the poet's release from imprisonment by his interest there, in 1605!

Digitized by Google

a part, a reversionary grant of the office of Master of the Revels. The king, by letters patent dated Oct. 5, 1621, granted him by the style and addition of "our beloved servant Benjamin Jonson, gentleman, the said office to be held and enjoyed by him and his assigns, during his life, from and after the death of sir George Buc, and sir John Astley, or as soon as the office should become vacant by resignation, forfeiture, or surrender."[1] In contemplation, perhaps, of his speedy accession to this office, James was desirous of conferring upon him the honour of knighthood. Jonson, for whom wealth and title had no charms, and who was well aware that a distinction of this nature would exasperate the envy which pursued him from his earliest years, shrunk from the meditated kindness of his sovereign, and prevailed on some of his friends about the court to dissuade his royal master from his purpose.[2]

Jonson received no advantage from the grant specified above, as sir J. Astley survived him: it appears, however, that, finding himself incapable, during his last illness, of performing the duties of the office, supposing it to devolve upon him, he had been

[1] *Shak.* vol. i. p. 626. Mr. Malone observes that "it would appear from a passage in the *Satiromastix* that Ben had made some attempts to procure the reversion of this place before the death of Elizabeth." Mr. Malone is unquestionably right; though he has failed to draw from it the only proper conclusion—namely, that at this period, Jonson was neither so obscure nor so unfriended as he would have us believe.

[2] "A friend told me this Faire time (Stourbridge) that Ben Johnson was not knighted, but scaped it narrowly, for that his majestie would have done it, had there not been means made (himself not unwilling) to avoyd it. Sep. 15, 1621." Extracted from a letter of the celebrated Joseph Mead of C. Col. Cambridge to sir Martin Stuteville. *Baker's MSS.* vol. xxxii, p. 355. Sir M. Stuteville was a friend and admirer of Jonson. One of his family has some verses on the poet's death, preserved among the Ashmole papers. They are kind and laudatory, but merit no particular notice.

Digitized by Google

graciously permitted by Charles to transfer the patent to his son, who died in 1635. Why Mr. Malone should suppose (*Shak.* vol. ii. p. 311) that he was not on good terms with his father, I cannot tell. Fuller only says that Jonson "was not very happy in his children:" but an indulgent and tender parent like Jonson, may be sensibly afflicted by the conduct of a child, without much diminution of affection, or interruption of kindness.

From 1621, when the *Gipsies Metamorphosed* was performed at Windsor, Jonson continued, apparently, to pass his time greatly to his satisfaction. Every Twelfth-night produced a Masque; and visits to his friends, correspondence with the literati of this and other countries, and occasional pieces of poetry, filled up the rest of his time.[3] Mr. Malone, who, from his crazy tripod, pronounces that Jonson had "stalked, for two centuries, on the stilts of artificial reputation," was little aware, perhaps, of the extent of his acquaintance with the learned, and of the estimation in which they held his talents: at any rate, the following passage from the Geneva edit. of Farnaby's Martial (and I could produce many such) must have escaped his knowledge:

"*Martialem solum à clariss. viro Petro Scriverio emendatum editumque desiderabam, quem nulla mea aut amicorum cura parare potuit; cujus tamen vicem non raro supplevit amica opera* BEN. JONSONII *viri* (*quod quæ ille per ludum scripserit, serio legentibus liquido apparebit*) *in poetis omnibus versatissimi,*

[3] He is said to have assisted Middleton and Fletcher in writing *The Widow*, which must have appeared about this time. This comedy was very popular, and not undeservedly, for it has a considerable degree of merit. I cannot, however, discover many traces of Jonson in it. The authors' names rest, I believe, on the authority of the editor, A. Gough, who sent the play to the press in 1652.

Digitized by Google

historiarum, morum, rituum, antiquitatum indagatoris exquisitissimi, et (quod semper in illo adverti) non contenti brachio levi tesqua et dignos vindice nodos transmittere, sed penitissimos usque sensus ratione, lectione, ingenio eruere desudantis; digni denique (utcunque à probatis merito probetur suo) meliori theatro quam quo malevolorum invidiam pascat,[4] *quanquam et hoc regium est posse invidium cùm mereri tum pati. Ille, inquam, mihi emendationes aliquot suppeditavit ex C. V. Scriverii Martiale, cujus copia illi facta Lugduni Bat. a viro non sine doctrinæ et humanitatis honorifica præfatione nominando Dan. Heinsio, &c.*"[5]

[4] This learned man, we see, notices the malevolence which incessantly pursued Jonson on the stage. We now hear of nothing but Jonson's *envy*:—those who lived and conversed with him, speak of the *envy* of others:—It was *then* the lowest description of scribblers which persecuted him; and I should wrong the modesty of those who abuse him *now*, if I termed them the lights of the age.

[5] Jonson presented a copy of this edit. to Mr. Briggs, (probably a relation of the celebrated mathematician,) with the following letter written on a blank leaf:

"AMICO SUMMO
D.
R. BRIGGESIO.

Eccum, tibi librum, mi Briggesie, quem heri, pene cum convitio, a me efflagitasti, mitto. Voluit ad te afferri etiam hodie, ne diutiùs moratus, me læsi officii reum apud te faceret. Est Farnabii mei Martialis. Non ille Jesuitarum castratus, eviratus, et prorsus sine Martiali Martialis. Iste illum integrum tibi virumque præbet, nec minus castum sed magis virilem. Annotationes etiam suas apposuit, tales autem ut videri possit sine commentario, commentator. Tu fac ut illam perlegas, protegas, et faveas homini in tanto sale, epulisque Mart. nec insulso nec jejuno. Dignus enim est, qui Virgiliis suis mereatur, ut foret

Toto notus in orbe Martialis,

quod de se ingeniosissimus poeta prædicare ausus sit, et vere; suffragante etiam

JONSONIO TUO.

Qui x°. Aug. M. DCXXIII.
amicitiæ et studii ergo
hoc levidense
D. D."

Digitized by Google

It has not been hitherto observed that Jonson was in possession of a most excellent library, which, assisted by a readiness of memory altogether surprising, facilitated the acquirement of that information for which he was so frequently solicited by his own countrymen, as well as strangers. He began to collect the best editions of the classics at an early period, and it may be doubted whether any private library in the kingdom was, at that time, so rich in scarce and valuable books as his own. He was ever ready to communicate them to his friends: not only was his study open to their researches;[6] but its contents were always at their disposal. It cannot be too often repeated that this writer, who has been described as a mere mass of spleen and ill-nature, was, in fact, the frankest and most liberal of mankind. I am fully warranted in saying that more valuable books given to individuals by Jonson are yet to be met with, than by any person of that age. Scores of them have fallen under my own inspection, and I have heard of abundance of others.[7] The following passage may amuse the reader from the

[6] The learned Selden, in speaking of a book which he had occasion to examine, and which was not in his extensive collection, says—"I presume that I have sufficiently manifested this out of Euripides his Orestes, which when I was to use, not having the scholiast, out of whom I hoped some aid, I went, for this purpose, to see it in the well furnisht librarie of my beloved friend, that singular poet, master BEN JONSON, whose special worth in literature, accurate judgment, and performance, known only to that FEW which are truly able to know him, hath had from me, ever since I began to learn, an increasing admiration." *Titles of Honour*, 1614, fol. p. 93.

[7] I have great pleasure in copying the following passage from Mr. D'Israeli, because it is the result of conviction acting on a liberal mind. "No poet has left behind him, in MS. so many testimonies of personal fondness as Jonson, by inscriptions and addresses, in the copies of his works, which he presented to his friends: Of these, I have seen more than one, fervent and impressive." *Quar. of Authors*, vol. iii. p. 25.

Digitized by Google

exquisite absurdity of its conclusion. "In the Upper Library of Trinity College," (it is Warton who speaks,) "is a Vossius's *Greek Historians*, with a series of MS. notes. It appears, by a latin mem. in Dr. Bathurst's hand-writing, that this book originally belonged to BEN JONSON, who gave it to Dr. Langbaine.—Jonson's name being mentioned, I cannot forbear adding"—(Here I verily expected some compliment to his learning, or liberality)—"that in the character of Volpone, Aubrey tells us, Jonson intended Sutton, the founder of the charter-house"! *Life of Bathurst*, 8vo. p. 148. It seems as if it were indispensable that the name of Jonson must always be followed by some stupid calumny.[8]

We have long lost sight of Inigo Jones; he now re-appears as Jonson's coadjutor in the Masque of *Time Vindicated*, 1623.[9] As none of those pieces

[8] It may be added here, that Warton appears to have known about as much of Jonson and his writings as Mr. Headley. In his notes on Milton's *Arcades*, he says (but with no friendly voice) that "Echo *frequently* appears in the masques of Jonson." Frequently! In *Pan's Anniversary* (as I think) a musical close is directed to be repeated:—and this is all the Echo. Again: "Jonson was too proud to assist or be assisted," a sentiment quoted for its justice by Mr. Chalmers. Now, Jonson solicited and accepted assistance, or, as he calls it, "succour," from Selden, Cotton, Carew, and many others, and he undoubtedly assisted, or joined with, more writers than any person of the age in which he lived!

[9] The mention of this Masque gives me an opportunity of noticing a well-known song by G. Wither, "Shall I, wasting in despair," &c. published in a little vol. 1625, with an "Answere to each verse by master Johnson." If the reader will turn to "Time Vindicated," (vol. viii. p. 3,) where I have pointed out, for the first time, the object of the poet's satire, he will need no farther proof that Jonson was little likely to busy himself with parodying the verses of Wither, however popular. He was not prone, at any time, to mix his *heels with other men's heads*; and least of all, would he have joined in *this kind of chase*, with a declared enemy.—That the "Song" is printed with his name, signifies nothing. It was current with the public; and he gave himself no concern about the matter.

Digitized by Google

which appear in the folio of 1641 were given to the press by Jonson, it is not possible to say whether he shared in any produced previously to the present one. At all events, no symptoms of ill-will are to be found; and there is good reason to suppose that hitherto nothing had occurred to interrupt their friendship. In *Pan's Anniversary*, (1625) Inigo again assisted Jonson, and his name is duly mentioned in the title-page, where it takes place of the poet's, a circumstance, as it appears, of some moment. This little piece was the last which Jonson had the good fortune to write for James I. who died on the 27th of March in this year, and in whom he lost the most indulgent of masters, the most benevolent of sovereigns. Charles, indeed, both knew and valued Jonson; but he was not so competent a judge of literary talents, nor was he, either by nature or habit, so familiar with his servants, or so condescending to their affairs, as the easy and good-natured James.

A long series of years had now elapsed since our author turned his thoughts to the theatre. From 1616 to 1625, he appears to have forgotten that there was such a place;[1] he was now, however, forcibly reminded of it, and wrote the *Staple of News*, a comedy of no ordinary merit. Two evils were, at this time, rapidly gaining upon the poet, want and disease. The first, he certainly might have warded off, at least for some time, had he been gifted with the slightest portion of economy; but he was altogether thoughtless and profuse, and his long sickness, therefore, overtook him totally unprovided. From the accession to the death of James, nothing is to be found respecting his necessities; not a complaint, not a murmur,—but other times were at hand, and we shall soon hear of petitionary poems, and supplications for relief.

[1] See p. xcv.

Digitized by Google

The disease which attacked him about the end of this year, was the palsy. He seems to have laboured from his youth under a scorbutic affection, (derived probably from his parents,) and which assailed him with increasing virulence as his constitution gave way: to this, must be added a tendency to dropsy, not the least of his evils.

From the first stroke of the palsy, he gradually recovered, so far, at least, as to be able in some measure, to pursue his usual avocations; and, in 1626, produced the pleasant Antimasque of *Jophiel*, to vary a preceding Entertainment. The Masques, for the three following years, do not appear; nor is it known that any were written by our author: indeed, from a hint in the Epilogue to his next play, it seems as if the court had ceased to call on him for the customary contribution. Meanwhile his infirmities rapidly increased, and with them his wants: he was no longer able to leave his room, or to move in it without assistance; and, in this condition, he applied again to the theatre, and produced the comedy of the *New Inn*, which was brought out Jan. 19, 1629-30. The fate of this drama is well known: it was driven from the stage, and pursued with brutal hostility by his ungenerous and unrelenting enemies.[2] The epi-

[2] *Censure of the New Inn.*

"Thou sayst no palsye doth thy braine-pan vex,
I praye the tell me what an apoplex
Thy Pegasus can stirr, yett thy best care
Makes him but shuffle like the parson's mare,
Who from his own side witt sayes thus by mee,
He hath bequeath'd his bellye unto thee;
To holde that little learning which is fled
Into thy gutts from out thy emptye head," &c.
Ashmole MSS.

These are the softest lines which I could pick out from about fourscore; and these, with the verses of Gill and Chapman furnish a correct sample of the disposition of those, who attacked our

Digitized by Google

logue forms a melancholy contrast to some of his earlier productions, and cannot, indeed, be contemplated without a feeling of pity:

> "If you expect more than you had to-night;
> The maker is sick and sad:—[3]
> ——— he sent things fit
> In all the numbers both of verse and wit,
> If they have not miscarried: if they have,
> All that his faint and faltering tongue doth crave,
> Is, that you not impute it to his brain;
> That's yet unhurt, although, set round with pain,
> It cannot long hold out: all strength must yield;
> Yet judgment would the last be in the field,
> With the true poet."——

An allusion to the king and queen which follows this extract, awoke the slumbering kindness of Charles, and he instantly sent him a hundred pounds, (a truly royal present,) for which the poet, with an overflowing heart, returned him thanks in three poems, written at short intervals, and all labouring for adequate language to express the fullness of gratitude, respect, and duty.[4]

author in his own times. Of all the libels on him which have fallen in my way, I do not recollect one that possessed common humanity or common sense: they never speak of any injury, or provocation received from the poet; but claim to be the mere effusions of wanton malice; yet the Walpoles, *et id genus omne*, dream of nothing but "the overpowering brutality of Jonson."

[3] It should be recorded to his praise, that nothing could suppress his ardour for improvement. It is in the midst of these afflicting circumstances that he writes a poetical epistle to Howell, earnestly soliciting his aid to procure Davies's Welsh Grammar, for which he was unable to seek himself. Jonson's lines are lost: but Howell has given his reply to them. Howell notices the extensive collection of grammars, of which Jonson was already possessed.

[4] This transaction is thus wilfully perverted by Shiels,— "In 1629 Ben fell sick, Charles I. was supplicated in his favour, and sent him *ten guineas*. When the messenger delivered the sum, Ben said, "His majesty has sent me ten guineas *because I am poor*,

Digitized by Google

This timely relief appears to have produced a favourable change in the poet's mind, and encouraged him to apply to the benevolence of his sovereign for an extension of kindness. There is a flow of gaiety and good humour in the little poem which he wrote, and called a humble *Petition to the best of monarchs, masters, men*, that contrasts very happily with the gloomy and desponding tone of the passage in the preceding page. It is to the honour of Charles, that he not only granted the prayer of the petition, ("that he would be pleased to make the 100 marks of his father 100 pounds,") but liberally added of himself a tierce of Canary,[5] (Jonson's favourite wine,) which has been continued to his successors, and of which the first glass should, in gratitude, be offered by them to the poet's memory. The warrant is given below.[6]

and live in an alley; go and tell him, that his soul lives in an alley." This impudent falsehood is still repeated, even by those who have the poet's own acknowledgments for a hundred pounds before them: and Smollet was eager to insert it in his *History of England*, because it bore hard upon Charles. The writers of the *Bio. Brit.* have given one of Jonson's grateful poems to the king—"not so much," they properly say, "to confute, as to *shame* the story."—But who shames a slanderer!

[5] Milton has been unjustly charged with reflecting on Charles for his attachment to the drama: But though Milton did not urge this as a crime against the king, other writers of that disastrous period did. "Had king Charles (says one of them) but studied scripture half so much as BEN JONSON or SHAKSPEARE, he would have learned that when Amaziah," &c. *Appeal to all rational men on King Charles's Trial*, by J. Cooke, 1649.

[6] CHARLES, R.

Charles, by the grace of God, Kinge of England, Scotland, Fraunce, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. to the Theasurer, Chancellour, under Theasurer, Chamberlens, and Barons of the Exchequer of vs, our heirs and successours, now beinge, and that hereafter shall be, and to all other the officers and ministers of the said court, and of the receipt, there now beinge, and that hereafter shall be; and to all others to whom these presents shall come, or to whom it shall or may apperteyn, greeting. Whereas our late

Digitized by Google

From 1627, the date of the *Fortunate Isles*, no masque appears to have been written by our author; at this period, however, the king, whose kindness

most deare father King James of happy memorie, by his letters pattents under the great seale of England, bearing date at Westminster, the first day of February, in the thirteenth year of his reign of England (for the considerations therein expressed) did give and graunt unto our well beloved servaunt, Benjamin Jonson, one annuitie or yearly pension of one hundred marks of lawful money of Englande, during his life, to be paid out of the said Exchequer, at the feast of the Anunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary, the Nativity of St. John Baptist, St. Michael the Archangel, and the birth of our Lord God, quarterly, as by the said letters patents more at large may appear. Which annuity or pension, together with the said letters patents, the said Benjamin Jonson hath lately surrendred vnto vs. Know yee nowe, that wee, for divers good considerations vs at this present especially movinge, and in consideration of the good and acceptable service, done vnto vs and our said father by the said Benjamin Johnson, and especially to encourage him to proceede in those services of his witt and penn, which wee have enjoined vnto him, and which we expect from him, are graciously pleased to augment and encrease the said annuitie or pension of one hundred marks, vnto an annuitie of one hundred pounds of lawful money of England for his life. And for the better effecting thereof of our especial grace, certen knowledge and meer motion, we have given and graunted, and by these presents for vs, our heirs and successors, upon the surrender aforesaid, do give and graunt unto the said Benjamin Johnson, one annuitie or yearly pension of one hundred pounds of England by the year, to have, hold, and yearly to receive the said annuitie or yearly pension of one hundred pounds of lawful money of England, by the year, unto the said Benjamin Johnson or his assignes, from the feast of ovr Lord God last past, before the date hereof, for and during the natural life of him the said Benjamin Johnson, at the receipt of the Exchequer of vs, our heirs and successours, out of the treasure of vs, our heirs and successours, from time to time there remayning, by the Theasurer and Chamberlens of vs, our heirs, and successours there, for the time beinge, as the foresaid four usual terms of the year (that is to say) at the feast of the Annuntiation of the blessed Virgin Mary, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, St. Michael the Archangel, and the birth of our Lord God, by even and equal portions quarterly to be paid. The first payment thereof to begin at the feast of the Annuntiation of the blessed Virgin Mary, next before the date of these presents.

Digitized by Google

had revived in all its force, commanded him, in conjunction with Inigo Jones, to prepare the usual Enter-

Wherefore our will and pleasure is, and we do by these presents for vs, our heirs and successors, require, command, and authorise the said Theasurer, Chancellour, under Theasurer, Chamberlens, and Barons, and other officers and ministers of the said Exchequer, now and for the time being, not only to paie or cause to be paide vnto the said Benjamin Johnson, or his assignes the said annuitie or yearly pension of one hundred pounds of lawful money of England according to our pleasure before expressed: and also from time to time to give full allowance of the same, according to the true meaning of these presents. And these presents, and the enrollment thereof, shall be unto all men whom it shall concern, sufficient warrant and discharge for the payinge and allowinge of the same accordingly, without any farther or other warrant to be in that behalf procured or obtained. And further know yee, that wee of our more especial grace, certen knowledge and meer motion, have given and granted, and by these presents for us, our heires and successors, do give and graunt unto the said Benjamin Johnson and his assigns, one terse of Canary Spanish wine yearly: to have, hold, perceive, receive, and take the said terse of Canary Spanish wine unto the said Benjamin Jonson and his assigns during the term of his natural life out of our store of wines yearly, and from time to time remayninge at or in our cellers within or belonging to our palace of Whitehall. And for the better effecting of our will and pleasure herein, we do hereby require and command all and singular officers and ministers whom it shall or may concerne, or who shall have the care or charge of our said wines, that they or some one of them do deliver or cause to be delivered the said terse of wine yearly, and once in every year vnto the said Benjamin Johnson or his assignes, during the terme of his natural life, at such time and times as he or they shall demand or desire the same. And these presents or the inrollment thereof shall be unto all men whom it shall concerne a sufficient warrant and discharge in that behalf, although express mention, &c. In witness, &c.

Ex per Ro. HEATH.

Witness, &c.

Maie it please your most excellent Majestie,

This conteyneth your majestie's graunte unto Benjamin Johnson, your majestie's servaunte, during his life, of a pension of 100*l.* *per annum*, and of a terse of Spanish wine yearly out of your majestie's store remaining at White-hall.

And is done upon surrender of a former letters patents granted

Digitized by Google

tainments for the festivity of the new year. The first piece was *Love's Triumph through Callipolis*, which seems to have been well received; the second, which was produced about two months after it, was *Chloridia*, better known by its having given birth to the dispute between these ancient friends, than by any merit of its own. Both masques were printed before the end of the year, and the "Inventors" were said, in the title-page, to be Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones; a fatal collocation of names for the declining poet. His complaints, meanwhile, increased; and, with them, his necessities. He rarely went abroad, and, as his helpless state made assistance absolutely necessary, he seems, about this time, to have taken into his service a respectable woman, who managed his little household, and continued with him till he died. It has been already observed, that Jonson was utterly devoid of worldly prudence; what was liberally given was lavishly spent, and he was seldom free from want. He was, indeed, like his mother, "no churl;" his table was ever free to his friends; and we learn from Howell, that he gave repasts even in those evil days, which an epicure might have shared with delight. Wine he always considered as necessary—and perhaps it was so—to counteract the occasional influence of that morbid tendency to melancholy generated by a constitutional affection of the scurvy; which also rendered society

unto him by your late royal father, of a pension of 100 marks *per annum*.

Signified to be your Majestie's pleasure by the Lord Theasurer.

RO. HEATH.

Endorsed thus. *March* 1630.

Expl. apud Westm' vicesimo sexto die Martii anno R Ris Caroli quinto.

per WINDEBANK.

Digitized by Google

desirable, and, in some measure, indispensable to him.

Jonson was not called on for a masque in the following year; and this source of emolument, which he could ill forego, was therefore lost to him. Those who have been accustomed to hear of nothing but his unprovoked persecution of Inigo Jones, will be somewhat startled to find that this person, forgetful of old attachments, made use of his growing favour at court to depress and ruin a bed-ridden and necessitous friend. For the knowledge of his ungenerous conduct, in this instance, not a little important in the history of our calumniated poet, I am again indebted to the kindness of Mr. D'Israeli.

"Extract of a Letter from Mr. Pory to sir Thomas Puckering, Bart.

"The last Sunday at night, the king's Mask was acted in the banquetting house, the queen's being suspended till another time, by reason of a soreness which fell into one of her delicate eyes.

"The inventor or poet of this Mask was Mr. Aurelian Townshend, sometime toward (steward) to the lord treasurer Salisbury; Ben Jonson being, for this time, discarded by reason of the *predominant power of his antagonist* Inigo Jones, who this time twelvemonth, was angry with him *for putting his own name before his* in the title-page; which Ben Jonson has made the subject of a bitter satire or two against Inigo.

"*Jan.* 12, 163½."

"Whoever was the aggressor," says Walpole, "the turbulence and brutality of Jonson were sure to place him most in the wrong." This assertion is not quite clear in the present case, in which the magnanimity of Jones is as disputable as his humanity. He seems, indeed, to have persecuted Jonson with im-

Digitized by Google

placable malice:—not only *for this time* was the poet laid aside by his influence, but for the residue of his melancholy existence. His conduct, for the rest, fully justifies the strongest lines in the *Expostulation*, vol. viii. p. 110:

> ——— "O shows, shows, shows!
> The eloquence of masques! what need of prose—
> Or verse, or prose to express," &c.

since it cannot be denied that whatever ravages disease had made on the faculties of Jonson, he was yet many degrees above master Aurelian Townshend, of whom no one, I believe, ever heard before. The truth is, that Jones wanted, as Jonson has it, to be the *Dominus Do-all-of-the-work*, and to engross all the praise. This avarice of credit is not unpleasantly touched in the ridiculous interlude annexed to *the Tale of a Tub:*

> "*Med.* I have a little knowledge in design,
> Which I can vary, sir, to *infinito.*
> *Tub. Ad infinitum*, sir, you mean.
> *Med.* I do;
> I stand not on my latin: I'll invent;
> But I must be alone then, join'd with no man."

In fact, Jones had no taste for poetry, and an obscure ballad maker who could string together a few rhymes to explain the scenery, was more acceptable to him than a man of talent, who might aspire to a share of the praise given to the Entertainment.

The cruelty of Jones in depriving our author of the court patronage had an unfavourable effect upon his circumstances in many respects. The city, from whom he had been accustomed to receive an annual sum by way of securing his services when occasion called for them, seem to have watched the moment of declining favour, and withdrawn their bounty.[1]

[1] Of this Jonson complains with great indignation to the earl of Newcastle, in a petitionary letter, written with some humour as

Digitized by Google

The example was probably followed by many who would not have introduced it, and as his salary was, at all times, irregularly paid, he was once more reduced to extremities, and driven to address a pathetic epistle to the lord treasurer Weston, for relief.[2] In this, he says, that disease and want, with their associates, had beset him for five years, and that his muse,

> "Now lay block'd up and straiten'd, narrow'd in,
> Fix'd to the bed and boards, unlike to win
> Health, or scarce breath, as she had never been"![3]

This appears to be his last "mendicant epistle," and it was not written in vain. Assistance reached

well as spirit. He calls it their *chanderly pension*. It deserved a better name, for it was a hundred nobles per ann. a sum which could ill be spared by him at such a time. The court of aldermen withdrew it Dec. 19th, 1631. It appears from this letter that Jonson had somewhat recovered from the first stroke of the palsy; the second, the fatal stroke, he places in 1628.

[2] The following letter was probably written at this period.

My noblest Lord and best Patron,

I send no borrowing epistle to provoke your lordship, for I have neither fortune to repay, nor security to engage, that will be taken: but I make a most humble petition to your lordship's bounty to succour my present necessities this good time [festival] of Easter, and it shall conclude all begging requests hereafter on the behalf

of your truest beadsman and
most thankful servant,
B. J.

To the earl of Newcastle, [no date.]
[*Harl. MSS.* 4955.]

[3] About this time Randolph, whom he had adopted, addressed to him, with filial reverence, "a gratulatory poem;" in which he thus refers to his disease:

> "And here, as piety bids me, I intreat
> Phœbus to lend thee some of his own heat,
> To cure thy *palsie*, else I will complain
> He has no skill in herbs, and we in vain
> Style him the god of physic: 'twere his praise
> To make thee as immortal as thy lays," &c.

Digitized by Google

him from various quarters; and some alleviating circumstances of another kind contributed at the same time, to smoothe the bed of pain, and heal his wounded spirit. He received several copies of complimentary verses from the admirers of his talents; and his munificent patron, the earl of Newcastle, who had incidentally heard of it, applied to him for a transcript of some of them. Jonson's answer follows.

"My noblest Lord, and my Patron by excellence,

"I have here obeyed your commands, and sent you a packet of my own praises; which I should not have done if I had any stock of modesty in store:—but "obedience is better than sacrifice,"—and you command it. I am now like an old bankrupt in wit, that am driven to pay debts on my friends' credit; and, for want of satisfying letters to subscribe bills of exchange.

"Your devoted

"BEN JONSON."

4th Feb. 1632.

To the Right Hon. the Earl of Newcastle.

This letter inclosed several poems; among which were two by the celebrated lord Falkland never printed, a third, printed without a name in *Wit Restored*, but here signed Nic. Oldisworth, and a fourth of considerable length by R. Goodwin,[4] of which this is the concluding couplet:

[4] Of this person I know no more than is found in Aubrey. "He was (he says) a general scholar and had a delicate witt; was a great historian and an excellent poet." *Letters*, vol. iii. 360. The Editors of these letters are at a loss for the meaning of the next sentence. "The journey into France crept in Bishop Corbet's poems was made by him." Read it thus, and the difficulty will vanish. "The Journey into France, crept into Bishop Corbet's poems, was made by him." But can this be so?

Digitized by Google

> Other oblivion, BEN, thou ne'er wilt find
> Than that, which, with thee, puts out all mankind"—

Lord Falkland, who is insulted by Walpole for the meanness of his poetry, (which yet is superior to his own,) speaks of it with a modesty which must take away all inclination to censure. I know, he says,

> "that what I here have writ
> May praise my friendship, but condemn my wit."

Our author was now employed upon the *Magnetic Lady*, which was brought out in the October term of this year. "It was generally esteemed," Langbaine tells us, "an excellent play, though, in the poet's days, it found some enemies;"[5] among whom he specifies the younger Gill, of whose ribaldry a specimen will be found in volume vi. I have, elsewhere, noticed the inaccuracy of the dates prefixed to Howell's *Letters*. He speaks of this drama as in existence in 1629; but if the licenser's authority were not sufficient (which it is) for assigning it to the present year, there is an incidental passage in a letter from Mr. Pory to sir Tho. Puckering, (Sept. 20th, 1632,) which would put it out of dispute. "Ben Jonson, who I thought had been dead, has written a play against the next term, called the *Magnetic Lady*." *Harl. MSS.* vol. 7000. We may collect from this, that Jonson had ceased to appear abroad, and was entirely lost to those who looked for him only at Whitehall and the theatres. Indeed, his maladies had recently increased, and left him as little leisure as power for literary exertions of any

[5] There is an amiable trait recorded of Inigo Jones. He was present at the first representation of this play, and made himself remarkable by his boisterous ridicule of it. "He grew fat," Gill says, "with laughing"! "Whoever was the aggressor, Jonson always took care to be most in the wrong: such was his BRUTALITY," &c.

Digitized by Google

kind. Dryden calls his last plays his "dotages"[6]—they want indeed, much of the freedom and vigor of his early performances; but they exhibit no signs of mental imbecility, and one of them, the *New Inn*, has more than one passage of merit.[7] There is, however, a want of generosity in this triumph over the poet's declining years. His perseverance in writing was, in truth, a misfortune; but it was forced upon him by the urgent calls of his situation. There were, indeed, intervals of ease and comfort, and in these he wrote with his usual happiness; but he was unable to wait for them, and his "bed-ridden and afflicted muse" was frequently urged to exertions of which she was manifestly incapable.

A few trifling pieces of poetry close the melancholy account of this year. It is evident, however, that we have but a small part of what was written. Something was probably lost in the confusion which followed his death, and more in the wreck of his patron's fortunes; but, exclusively of these, it appears that we have not all our author's printed works. The following letter which (though undated) appears to be written about this period, alludes to a work of which nothing is now to be found.

[6] Meaning, it may be presumed, the *New Inn*, the *Magnetic Lady*, and the *Tale of a Tub*.

[7] The good taste of Mr. Lamb has led him to make considerable extracts from this play, which is so unfeelingly ridiculed by the commentators on Shakspeare, who never condescended to open it. He concludes with a remark that does equal credit to his liberality and his judgment. "These, and the preceding extracts, (from the *Case is Altered* and the *Poetaster*,) may serve to shew the poetical fancy and elegance of mind of the supposed rugged old bard. A thousand beautiful passages might be added from those numerous court-masques and entertainments, which he was in the daily habit of producing, to prove the same thing; but they do not fall within my plan." *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets.*

Digitized by Google

"My Lord,

"The faith of a fast friend with the duties of an humble servant, and the hearty prayers of a religious beadsman, all kindled upon this altar to your honour, my honourable lady, your hopeful issue, and your right noble brother, be ever my sacrifice!

"It is the lewd printer's fault that I can send your lordship no more of my book. I sent you one piece before the fair by Mr. Witherington, and now I send you this other morsel. The fine gentleman that walks the town; the Fiend; but before he will perfect the rest, I fear, he will come himself to be a part under the title of the absolute knave, which he hath played with me.

"My printer and I shall afford subject enough for a tragi-comedy; for with his delays and vexation, I am almost become blind; and if heaven be so just, in the metamorphosis, to turn him into that creature which he most resembles, a dog with a bell to lead me between Whitehall and my lodging, I may bid the world good night.

"And so I do.

"BEN JONSON."

To the Earl of Newcastle.

[*Harl. MS.* 4955.]

The *Tale of a Tub*, the last work of Jonson, that was submitted to the stage, appeared in 1633. It makes no great pretensions to notice; yet it is correctly and even characteristically written: but though there may be something to amuse, there is little to interest; and it was probably not often called for. In the last scene of this comedy, Jonson had introduced a ridiculous piece of machinery, at the expense of his powerful enemy, Inigo Jones, who had, however, (as may be easily supposed,) sufficient influence with the master of the revels, to prevent its appearance.

Digitized by Google

In the spring of this year, Charles visited his native kingdom. He was splendidly entertained on the road by the nobility and gentry; but by none of them with such lavish magnificence as by the earl of Newcastle. Jonson was applied to on the occasion for one of those little congratulatory interludes which usually made a part of the royal entertainments; and the following letter from the grateful poet, probably accompanied *Love's Welcome at Welbeck*.[8]

"My noble Lord, and my best Patron,

"I have done the business your lordship trusted me with; and the morning after I received by my beloved friend, master Payne, your lordship's timely gratuity—I style it such, for it fell like the dew of heaven on my necessities—I pray to God my work may have deserved it; I meant it should in the working it, and I have hope the performance will conclude it. In the mean time, I tell your lordship what I seriously think—God sends you these chargeable and magnificent honours of making feasts, to mix with your charitable succours, dropt upon me your servant; who have nothing to claim of merit but a cheerful undertaking whatsoever your lordship's judgment thinks me able to perform.[9] I am

[8] Vol. viii. There was, indeed, another public occasion on which our author was employed to write; namely, the christening of a son of the earl of Newcastle, to whom some of the royal family stood sponsors. Of this little interlude (hitherto unpublished) some account will be found in the opening of the last volume.

[9] In this humble and thankful style is conceived all that has reached us of Jonson's correspondence with his patrons. Gratitude, indeed, was one of the feelings which peculiarly marked his character. I know, says Eliot (Jonson's personal enemy,) in an Epistle to the earl of Montgomery,

"I know
That Jonson much of what he has, does owe
To you; and to your family, and is never
Slow to profess it," &c. *Poems*, p. 108.

Digitized by Google

in the number of your humblest servants, my lord, and the most willing; and do joy in the good friendship and fellowship of my right learned friend, master Payne, than whom your lordship could not have employed a more diligent and judicious man, or that hath treated me with more humanity; which makes me cheerfully to insert myself into your lordship's commands, and so sure a clientele.

"Wholly and only your lordship's.

"BEN. JONSON."

To the Earl of Newcastle.

It would be a heart-rending task minutely to trace the progress of our author's decline from the period at which we are arrived. He continued, while his *faint and faltering tongue* could articulate, to pay his annual duty to his royal master, and he wrote, at the request of the earl of Newcastle, another little interlude to grace the reception of the king and queen at Bolsover, called also *Love's Welcome;* but this appears to be almost the last of his works, if we except the satires on Inigo Jones, which, according to the dates assigned by Howell, were not written till 1635.[1]

One bright and sunny ray yet broke through the gloom which hung over his closing hours. In this he produced the *Sad Shepherd*, a pastoral drama of exquisite beauty, which may not only be safely opposed to the most perfect of his early works, but to any similar performance in any age or country. The better half of this drama was unfortunately lost in the confusion that followed his death; for, that he had put the last hand to it, I see no reason to doubt.[2]

[1] Since I have had an opportunity of examining the Museum MSS. I have less confidence in these *dates* than before. Oldys is completely justified in his doubts of their accuracy.

[2] It is not altogether improbable that we owe the loss of this pastoral drama to the circumstance of shutting up the theatres

Digitized by Google

This was apparently the close of his labours. Among his papers were found the plot and opening of a domestic tragedy on the story of *Mortimer, Earl of March*, together with the *Discoveries* and the *Grammar of the English Language*, on both of which he probably continued to write while he could hold a pen. The minute accuracy of the Grammar, and the spirit and elegance, the judgment and learning displayed in every part of the Discoveries, are worthy of all praise. It may, indeed, be said, that they are the recollections of better days; and, in some measure, this is undoubtedly the case: but no difference of style or manner is any where apparent; and it is certain, from internal evidence, that a considerable portion of the latter work must have been written a short time before his dissolution.

That event was now rapidly approaching. He had evidently received a religious education from his parents, and his works sufficiently shew that he was not without serious impressions of his duty towards his Maker; these grew more frequent and strong perhaps in his affliction, and it is gratifying to learn from the bishop of Winchester, who often visited him during his long confinement, that he expressed the deepest sorrow and contrition for "profaning the scripture in his plays." It is proper to observe, however, that the memory of the good Izaac Walton, (who gives us this part of the bishop's conversation,) must have deceived him in this place. Jonson has no profanations of scripture in his plays: He has, indeed, profanations of the sacred name (like all his contemporaries,) and of these he did well to repent

this year. (1636). There is an allusion to this circumstance in Habington's Elegy on our author's death:

——— "Heaven, before thy fate,
That thou thyself mightst thine own dirges hear,
Made the sad stage close mourner for a year," &c.

Digitized by Google

"with horror." In this instance, it *was good for him to have been afflicted;* and, as his remorse was poignant, it is a part of christian charity to hope that it was not in vain. He died on the 6th of August, 1637, being then sixty-three years of age, and was buried on the 9th in Westminster Abbey, "in the north aisle, in the path of square stone opposite to the scutcheon of Robertus de Ros." A common pavement stone, Mr. A. Chalmers says, was laid over his grave, with the short and irreverent inscription of *O rare Ben Jonson!* There was nothing *irreverent*, however, intended by this brief epiphonema. His friends designed to raise a noble monument to his memory, by subscription, and till this was ready nothing more was required than to cover his ashes decently with the stone which had been removed. While this was doing, Aubrey tells us, sir John Young, of Great Milton, Oxfordshire, whom he familiarly calls Jack Young, chanced to pass through the abbey, and, not enduring that the remains of so great a man should lie at all without a memorial; "gave one of the workmen eighteen pence to cut the words in question." The subscription was fully successful; but the troubles which were hourly becoming more serious, and which not long after broke out into open rebellion, prevented the execution of the monument, and the money was returned to the subscribers.

Although Jonson had probably experienced some neglect towards the termination of his days, yet the respect for his memory was very general, and his death was long lamented as a public loss. Many of the elegies written on the occasion were collected by Dr. Duppa, bishop of Winchester, and tutor to the prince of Wales, and published a few months after the poet's death,[3] under the title of JONSONUS VIRBIUS.

[3] The imprimatur to this little volume is dated Jan. 23, 163$\frac{7}{8}$.

Digitized by Google

For this act of pious friendship, Duppa received the thanks of his contemporaries, and, among the rest, of Davenant, who compliments him on the occasion in a poem of some merit. As the collection is of rare occurrence, and contains several pieces by the most celebrated names of the time, it is reprinted at the end of Jonson's Works, together with short notices of the respective authors, furnished by the kindness of my liberal and ingenious friend, Octavius Gilchrist, at a moment when kindness is doubly felt; when I was overwhelmed with affliction for an irreparable loss, and incapable of the slightest exertion.

Jonson left no family. His wife appears to have died some time before his journey into Scotland, and he never married again. Most of his children died young, and none survived him.

His person was large and corpulent. He had, Aubrey says, been fair and smooth-skinned, but a scorbutic humour appears to have fallen, at an early period, into his face, and to have scarred it in a very perceptible degree: still, however, he must have been, while young, a personable man. Decker, as we have seen, describes him as a mere monster in the *Satiromastix;* but this is a scenical picture, the distorted representation of an exasperated enemy. Randolph and others of his friends and admirers, who could only have known him in his advanced age, trace a resemblance in him to the head of Menander, as exhibited on ancient medals. We are not left, however, to contending reports, as many portraits of him were taken in his own time, several of which are come down to us sufficiently perfect to shew that his features were neither irregular nor unpleasing. After he had attained the age of forty, an unfavour-

Gataker told Aubrey that the title of *Jonsonus Virbius* was given to it by lord Falkland.

Digitized by Google

able change took place in his figure, to which we find frequent allusions in his writings. He speaks of his "mountain belly, and his ungracious gait," and is always foremost to jest at what did not, perhaps, escape the pleasantry of his companions.

Whalley, who sometimes sacrifices his better judgment to the opinions of others, tells us that "his disposition was reserved and saturnine." This is contradicted by the whole tenour of his life. "He was, moreover, (he adds) not a little oppressed with the gloom of a splenetic imagination, and, as an instance of it, he told Drummond that he had lain a whole night fancying he saw the Carthaginians and Romans fighting on his great toe."[4] Who does not see that Jonson was giving, in the friendly flow of conversation, an account of some casual aberration of reason, produced by a passing fever, and which no one but his perfidious entertainer would have treasured up, or sought to pervert to an unworthy purpose! That he had occasional fits of gloom may be readily granted; and we know whence they sprung:—apart from these, he was frank and unreserved, and it is impossible to read the accounts of the meetings at the Mermaid and the Apollo without amazement at the perversity which could thus mis-state his character.

Lord Clarendon tells us that "his conversation was very good, and with men of most note;" and the excellent lord Falkland (vol. ix. p. 5) observes that, upon a near acquaintance with him, he was doubtful whether his candour or his talents were the

[4] He told Drummond no such thing "as an instance," &c. Whalley, like the rest, looked only to Shiels, who has again interpolated his own ribaldry, and joined two passages together, which, in his author, are perfectly distinct, and relate to different qualities. But enough of this despicable scribbler, whom I gladly abandon to the admiration of those who, with Mr. Malone, think forgery, when employed in the ruin of Jonson's reputation, "*an innocent jeu d'esprit.*" *Shak.* vol. i. p. 619.

Digitized by Google

greater. No man, in fact, had lived more in the world than Jonson, conversed with a greater variety of characters, was quicker to remark, or abler to retain, the peculiarities of each: this, with his habitual frankness of communication, rendered his society as delightful as it was instructive. The testimony of lord Clarendon is of the highest authority. He lived, he says, "many years on terms of the most friendly intercourse with our author," and he was, in consequence, no ill judge of the society in which he was to be found: it is therefore not without equal surprise and sorrow that I find the editor of Dryden's Works repeatedly accusing him of "delighting *in low company*[5] and *profane* conversation." Would the exemplary earl of Clarendon have termed this conversation *very good?* or such company, *men of most note?* Were Camden and Selden, and Hawkins and Martin, and Cary and Morrison, were Corbett, and Hackett, and Duppa, and Morley, and King, (all bishops,) low company? Were the Digbys, the Spensers, the Ogles, the Cecils, the Sidneys, the Sackvilles low company? Were Coke and Egerton and Pembroke and Portland and Aubigny low company?—Yet with these Jonson lived from youth to age, and even his sick chamber and his death-bed were consecrated by the frequent resort of the wise and good:—

> "To HIM how daily flock'd, what reverence gave
> All that had wit, or would be thought to have;
> How the wise too did with mere wits agree:
> As Pembroke, Portland, and grave D'Aubigny;
> Nor thought the rigid'st senator a shame,
> To add his praise to so deserv'd a fame"!
>
> *Falkland's Ecl.*

[5] This contradicts even the reports of the poet's enemies. The charge against him during his life is not that he delighted in low company, but—that he aspired to society far above his rank.

Digitized by Google

Such is the language of one who cherished his acquaintance to the last: and yet we are required to believe, on the word of a writer of the present day, that Jonson delighted in "gross and vulgar society!"[6]

[6] With the contempt expressed for the poet's talents I have nothing to do; but I must not suffer his moral character to be defamed, in silence. The object is to debase Jonson by assimilating him to Shadwell. "Huge corpulence, much coarseness of manners, and an ungentlemanly vulgarity of dialect * seem to have distinguished both." Again: "Shadwell seems to have imitated Ben Jonson in gross and coarse sensual indulgence and profane conversation." vol. x. 445. Again: "Shadwell resembled Jonson in the brutal coarseness of his conversation, and his vulgar and intemperate pleasures." Again: "Shadwell followed Jonson as *closely as possible*, he was brutal in his conversation, and much addicted *to the use of opium*," &c. This is the wantonness of injustice. If the elevation of Dryden made it necessary to overwhelm Shadwell with contempt, there seems to be no absolute

* Vulgarity of dialect! If this be meant of Jonson's conversation, it is contradicted by the testimony of all his acquaintance: if, of his compositions,—it is sufficient to answer, that Jonson was by far the most correct and elegant prose-writer of his time. The last of his works, the *Discoveries*, may be produced, not to confute, as the writers of the *Bio. Brit.* say, but to shame, such accusations. One of Decker's earliest charges against our author is, the scrupulous accuracy of his language; and the good bishop of Chichester, (Dr. H. King,) says of him;

"It is but truth; thou taught'st the ruder age
To speak by grammar, and reform'dst the stage."

To these may be added the testimony of E. Bolton, (whom Warton calls "that sensible old English critic," and Ritson, "that man of learning,") who, after stating his opinion of the most celebrated writers down to his own times, (1600,) says, "But if I should declare mine own rudeness rudely, I should then confess that I never tasted English more to my liking, nor more smart, and put to the height of use in poetry, than in that vital, judicious, and most practicable language of master Benjamin Jonson." *Hypercritica.* It is true that Jonson had not, at this period, written the *Silent Woman*, the *Fox*, or the *Alchemist;* and therefore as much of "an ungentlemanly vulgarity of dialect" as these pieces afford, must be subtracted from the commendations of Edmund Bolton.

Digitized by Google

The charge of "profane conversation" is contradicted by the whole tenour of his life. "For my

necessity for dragging Jonson forward at every turn. Jonson never injured Dryden. If he was praised and loved by Shadwell, it ought not to be attributed to him as a crime, for he had long been in his grave.

"Jonson is described as wearing a loose coachman's coat, frequenting the Mermaid Tavern, where *he drunk seas of Canary*, then reeling home to bed, and after a profuse perspiration, arising to his dramatic studies." *Life of Dryden*, p. 265. The passage, from which the above is taken, stands thus in Mr. Malone: "I have heard (Aubrey says) Mr. Lacy the player say that Ben Jonson was wont to wear a coat, like a coachman's coat, with slits under the arm-pit." Lacy is good authority for this circumstance; but to what period does it refer? To the last year of Jonson's life; when the poet, with that respect for the public which he always cherished, sent for him to his sick chamber, to give him a list of words in the Yorkshire dialect for the *Sad Shepherd*, on which he was then employed. Lacy, who did not leave Yorkshire till 1631 or 1632, could know little of Jonson but the form of his coat, which truly seems very well adapted to one who could barely move from his bed to his "studying chair, which was of straw, such as old women use, and such as Aulus Gellius is drawn in." But, continues Aubrey,—"he would many times exceed in drink, (this is not quite fairly translated, *he drank seas of Canary*,) then he would tumble home to bed, and when he had thoroughly perspired, then to study." That Jonson was fond, too fond, if the reader pleases, of good wine and good company, we know; but there is yet a word to be said on this passage. Aubrey leaps at once over forty years of Jonson's life: from 1596 to 1636, all that he tells us, with the exception of the passage just quoted, is, that he died in Westminster, and was buried there! Yet this is the foundation of the endless attacks upon him for *brutality* and *swinish licentiousness*. Aubrey knew nothing of our author but what he gathered from conversation, and Kent himself had not a better gift at *marring a plain tale in the telling*. Even in the short report of Lacy, he confounds the *Sad Shepherd* with the *Tale of a Tub*, though he had only to open it. And what does the reader imagine to be the origin of this charge of Jonson's "exceeding in drink, tumbling home to study," &c.? Simply, a character of himself put (in sport) into the mouth of Carlo Buffone, whom he expressly warns us against, as "a scurrilous and profane jester, as a violent railer, an immeasurable liar, and one that, swifter than Circe, transformed every person into deformity," &c. This is his speech: *Carlo.* "When the poet comes abroad (once in

Digitized by Google

own part," he says, in his manly appeal to the two Universities, "I can affirm, and from a *most clear conscience*, that I have ever trembled to *think towards the least profaneness;*" and he is borne out by all that remains of his works.[7] But his enemies rely on the

a fortnight) and makes a good meal among players, he has *caninum appetitum*, (marry, at home he keeps a good philosophical diet, beans and butter milk) and will take you off three, four, five, of these (draughts of Canary) one after another, and look villainously the while, like a one-headed Cerberus, and then when his belly is well balaced, and his brains rigged a little, he sails away, as if he would work wonders when he came home." *Every Man out of his Humour*. And this scurrility, which is given by Jonson as a striking example of the propensity of the speaker to defame "every honourable or revered person who came within the reach of his eye, by adulterate similes," (see vol. ii. p. 25,) is taken by Aubrey as a genuine delineation of character, and made, by the poet's enemies, the distinguishing feature of his whole life! Aubrey's addition to this precious story, is too curious to be omitted. "Ben Jonson had one eie lower than t'other, like Clun the player. Perhaps he begott Clun"! *Letters*, &c. vol. iii. p. 415.—Had this passage been quoted with the rest, we should have had incontinency added to "brutality and impiety."

[7] And, in his *Underwoods*, after adjuring his friend Colby, in a high strain of moral philosophy, to shun the usual vices of the army, he adds, as the most momentous charge of all—

"And last, *blaspheme not*. I did never hear
Man thought the valianter, for he durst swear," &c.

It should be observed that Anthony Wood's life of Jonson is incorrect in almost every part. He formed it on two documents; the MSS. of Aubrey, and the letter of Izaac Walton, which contains the passage already quoted, and which Aubrey also procured for him. Aubrey's authority is seldom to be relied on. A greater blunderer never existed, as Wood himself discovered when it was too late—he calls him "a roving magotty-pated man;" and such he truly was. Izaac Walton cannot be mentioned without respect:—but his letter was written nearly half a century after Jonson's death, and when the writer was in his eighty-seventh year. It is made up of the common stories of the time, and a few anecdotes procured, while he was writing, from the bishop of Winchester, who must himself, at the date of Izaac's letter, have been verging on ninety. It is not easy to discover what was the bishop's and what was Walton's—but on these Wood constructed his life of Jonson. He brings little of his own but a few dates.

Digitized by Google

authority of the infamous Shiels, who, not content with the scurrility which he has put into the mouth of Drummond, adds from himself, that "Jonson took every occasion to ridicule religion in his plays, and make it his sport in conversation!" (*Cibber's Lives*, &c. vol. i. p. 236.) His plays have been for two centuries before the public, and may be confidently appealed to on the present occasion. There is not a single passage in them which can be construed by the most inveterate of his persecutors into any "ridicule of religion:"—but I will not disgrace the poet any farther by defending him against a convicted liar; though I must be permitted, for the last time, to express my sincere regret that a blind hatred of Jonson should lead so many "better natures" to build their accusations on such authority. The poet's fortunes, like Marc Antony's, have "corrupted honest men."

I have already expressed my satisfaction at his repentance.—"He had undoubtedly," as Whalley says, "a deep sense of religion, and was under its influence." His Epigrams, Underwoods, and other collections of poetry bear abundant testimony of his serious disposition: sometimes his feelings of duty are rational, solemn, and pathetic; at other times they partake of his constitutional infirmity, and become gloomy and terrific.

> "Great and Good GOD; can I not think of thee,
> But it must straight my melancholy be?—
> I know my state, both full of shame and scorn,
> Conceived in sin, and unto labour born;
> Standing with fear, and must with horror fall,
> And destin'd unto judgment after all," &c.

"It may be offered too (Whalley adds) in his favour, that his offences against piety and good manners are very few. Were authority or example

Digitized by Google

an excuse for vice, there are more indecencies in a single play of the poet's contemporaries, than in all the comedies which he ever wrote: and even Shakspeare, whose *modesty is so remarkable*, has his peccant redundancies not less in number than those of Jonson." (*Life*, &c. p. liv.) Where Whalley discovered the "remarkable modesty of Shakspeare,"[8] as he has not told us, it would, perhaps, be useless to inquire. Was he aware of the opinion of the poet's contemporaries on this head? His *peccant redundancies*, too, are delicately contrasted with our author's "daring profanation of the Scriptures." The fact is, that the crime which is falsely charged on the one, falls with dreadful effect upon the other. Shakspeare is, in truth, the coryphæus of profanation. Texts of scripture are adduced by him with the most wanton levity; and, like his own Hal, he has led to *damnable iteration*. He too, let us hope, regarded his conduct in this respect, "with horror," though no record of it be found on earth.

Jonson's guilt was of a different degree:—

> "He turn'd no scripture phrases to a jest,
> And was inspired with rapture, not possest"!—

it consisted, as is already observed, of an abuse of the sacred name in idle exclamations. Profane swearing was unhappily the vice of the time; from the monarch on the throne to the peasant in his shed, all were familiarized to oaths of fearful import. Catholicism had introduced (as it every where does)

[8] Steevens observes on a note of Warburton, in which he speaks of Shakspeare's delicacy somewhat in the style of Whalley—"Dr. Warburton's recollection must have been weak, or his zeal for his author extravagant. Otherwise, he could not have ventured to countenance him on the score of delicacy; his offensive metaphors and allusions being undoubtedly more frequent than those of all his dramatic predecessors or contemporaries." *Shak.* vol. vi. p. 351.

Digitized by Google

expressions not to be repeated with impunity; adjurations by limbs, wounds, sufferings; by attributes, mysteries, &c., which, when they lost the reverence once attached to them, all, in short, that concealed their inherent turpitude, presented features of peculiar deformity. The most offensive of Jonson's dramas, in this respect, are the early 4tos, and of these, the first sketch of *Every Man in his Humour*; —this, however, was not given to the press by him: —the folio edition, the only one which appears to have experienced his care, is free from many of the blemishes which deform the others. His most usual oath in the latter, was an unmeaning exclamation "by G—d so!" from this, when his works were reprinted, he withdrew the G, and thus rendered the nonsense harmless. I am not afraid to confess that, in a few instances, where there was reason to suppose that he had overlooked it, I have surreptitiously abstracted the same letter. I know the importance of fidelity; but no considerations on earth can tempt me to the wanton or heedless propagation of impiety. I have always regarded with feelings of peculiar horror that foolhardy accuracy which with blind and bold irreverence ferrets out every blasphemous word which the author's better feelings had thrown aside, and felicitates the reader on the pernicious discovery. More than one editor of our old poets might be named—but *ignoti alta jaceant nocte!*[9]

[9] It may yet be observed that the whole of Jonson's later works (i. e. all the dramatic pieces produced during the last twenty-three years of his life,) are remarkably free from rash ejaculations. The office-book of sir Henry Herbert, however, supplies us with a very curious instance of the danger which he ran, notwithstanding his innocence, of being again charged with "blasphemy." The *Magnetic Lady* is void of all offence: yet for the profane language of this play the author, then sick in bed, was questioned by the Master of the Revels; and it was not till the performers were confronted with him, that they confessed themselves "to have intro-

Digitized by Google

Jonson's love of conviviality has been already noticed.[1] His attachment to wine he never denied; indeed, in this case, as in many others, he seems to have pleased himself with exaggerating his foibles, and playing into the hands of his enemies. I know not his motives for this conduct: pride was, perhaps, at the bottom of it; and he appears to act as if he would have it thought that the accusations of such characters as were banded against him could neither disturb nor disgrace him. With all this, however, it is not true, as Drummond says, that "drink was one of the elements in which he lived," or, as has been more recently asserted, that he was "an habitual sot." The immensity of his literary acquisitions,†

duced the oaths complained of into their respective parts, without his authority or even knowledge."

[1] It should be observed, however, that most of what we have on this subject was written after Jonson's death. The celebrity of his name made the *Apollo* famous, and those who belonged to the club when he died, or were successively admitted into it,* and who looked on themselves as his "sons," seem to have thought it an act of filial duty to exaggerate the jovial propensities of their "father." Hence a thousand songs, and invocations of this kind—

> "Fetch me BEN JONSON'S scull, and fill't with sack,
> Rich as the wine he drank, when the whole pack
> Of jolly sisters pledged, and did agree,
> It was no sin to be as gay as he:—
> If there be any weakness in the wine,
> There's virtue in the cup to make't divine, &c."
>
> *Preparations to Study*, 1641.

† While Jonson puts a ridiculous account of himself into the mouth of an "immeasurable liar," for the purpose of dramatic

* Even this conferred distinction. One of Shadwell's characters in *Bury Fair*, makes it his peculiar boast that "he was made Ben Jonson's son in the Apollo." It was not suspected in those days that the founder of this convivial society would be regarded hereafter as a "sullen" and "repulsive" misanthrope.

Digitized by Google

and the number and extent of his productions, refute the slander, no less than the gravity, dignity, wisdom and piety of those with whom he passed his life from manhood to extreme old age. That he was frequently found at the Mermaid, in his earlier years, and at his own club (St. Dunstan's) in his declining age we know; but so were many of the most wise and virtuous of his contemporaries. Domestic entertainments were, at that time, rare: the accommodations of a private house were ill calculated for the purposes of a social meeting; and taverns and ordinaries are therefore almost the only places in which we hear of such assemblies. This, undoubtedly, gives an appearance of licentiousness to the age, which, in strictness, does not belong to it. Long after the period of which we are now speaking, we seldom hear of the eminent characters of the day in their domestic circles; they constantly appear at coffee-houses, which had usurped the place of ordinaries; and it was not till the accession of the present royal family, which brought with it the stability of internal peace, that the mansions of the middle class received those advantages which made home the centre of social as well as of individual happiness and comfort.

"Jonson hath been often represented as of an envious, arrogant, overbearing temper, and insolent and haughty in his converse; but these ungracious drawings were the performance of his enemies; who certainly were not solicitous to give a flattering like-

satire, he thus describes, in his own person, the real nature of his employment:

> "I that spend half my nights, and all my days,
> Here in a cell, to get a dark pale face,
> To come forth worth the ivy and the bays;
> And, in this age, can hope no other grace"—

yet his enemies persist in taking his character from Carlo Buffone!

Digitized by Google

ness of the original. But considering the provocations he received, with the mean and contemptible talents of those who opposed him, what we condemn as vanity or conceit, might be only the exertions of conscious and insulted merit."[2] It may be so, but instead of endeavouring to account for the origin of some of those ill qualities, or to apologize for them, it would have been more judicious to deny the existence of them altogether. It is not true that Jonson was envious of his contemporaries:[3]—he was liberal of commendation; and more than enough remains to prove that he rejoiced in their merits, and forwarded their success; he assisted Selden, and Hacket, and Raleigh, and Hobbes, and many others; in a word, his advice, his skill, his pen were always at the command of his friends, and they were not sparingly employed by them. Neither is it true that he was "insolent and haughty in his converse." His conversation (lord Clarendon says) was very good; and it must, in fact, have been so, since he had the faculty of endearing himself to all who approached him.—

[2] Whalley. *Life of Jonson*, p. lv.

[3] Every act of Jonson's life is perverted. He told Drummond that he could have wished the *Feasting of the Forth* had been his own. This was evidently meant to convey the most cordial approbation; yet lord Woodhouslie cannot advert to the words without attempting to give them a malicious turn. The poem was so beautiful, it seems, that it "attracted the *envy* of Ben Jonson." Beautiful, indeed, it is:—but if Jonson *envied* Drummond, so he did "his beloved Beaumont:

> "What fate is mine, that when thou praisest me
> For writing better, I must *envy* thee!

so he did Fletcher:

> "Most knowing Jonson, proud to call him son,
> In friendly *envy* swore he had outdone
> His very self," &c.

so he did Cartwright and many others—and it is for this peculiar strain of generous applause, that he is taxed with hatred of all merit!

Digitized by Google

To say nothing of the distinguished characters of both sexes with whom he had grown old in a constant intercourse of friendship and familiarity, the men of genius and talents who succeeded them, the hope and pride of the coming age,[4] all flocked to Jonson, all aspired to become his "sons," all looked up to him for encouragement and advice, and all boasted of the pleasure and advantage derived from his society. Innumerable proofs of this might be accumulated without difficulty, for such was the rank of Jonson, such the space which he occupied in the literary sphere, that his name is found in contact with almost every eminent character of the day.

That he had a lofty opinion of himself may be allowed; indeed, he never affected to conceal it:—but this did not lead to any undue contempt of others, as may be seen by what he says of Camden, Selden, and an infinite number besides, whose names occur in his Underwoods, Epigrams, and smaller pieces. In truth, this self-complacency frequently attends great learning; and our author's learning was of gigantic bulk. The degree of genius and fancy which a man possesses, he can scarcely be said to ascertain by comparison:—he may, indeed, overrate it; but he may also set it too low: and there are instances in which these qualities have been unconsciously possessed.—But no man can be profoundly learned without knowing it: he cannot conceal from himself that the acquisition has been made with infinite labour; and he can form no very inadequate judgment of its degree, compared with that of others. This will account, in some measure, for that over-weening pride in which many of the most cele-

[4] The duke of Buckingham (Sheffield) used to talk with great satisfaction of his being taken to see Jonson, then in his decline, when he was a boy. He always retained a veneration for the aged poet; which probably did him no service with Dryden.

Digitized by Google

brated literary characters have indulged, and which, when unsupported by taste and judgment, and the better qualities of the mind, is, in truth, sufficiently offensive.

"In his studies Jonson was laborious and indefatigable: his reading was copious and extensive; his memory so tenacious and strong that, when turned of forty, he could have repeated all that he ever wrote: his judgment was accurate and solid; and often consulted by those who knew him well, in branches of very curious learning, and far remote from the flowery paths loved and frequented by the muses."[5] But, however widely diverged his occasional excursions might be, he always returned, with renovated ardour, to the companions of his youth, the classics of Greece and Rome, with whom his acquaintance was most familiar. "When I was in Oxon (Aubrey says) bishop Skinner, who lay at our college, (Trinity,) was wont to say that Ben Jonson understood an author as well as any man in England." Of this there is no doubt; and it may be fairly questioned whether "England" ever possessed a better scholar than this extraordinary man, whose name is become a bye-word, in our time, for "dulness," and whose character is thought to be of no further importance than as it serves to form a parallel with the "brutality," "sottishness," and "impiety" of Shadwell!

"In his friendships he was cautious and sincere, yet accused of levity and ingratitude to his friends; but his accusers were the criminals, insensible of the charms, and strangers to the privileges of friendship; for the powers of friendship, not the least of virtues, can only be experienced by the virtuous and the good." This is not one of my predecessor's happiest

[5] Whal. *Life*, &c. p. lv.

Digitized by Google

passages; but it contains some truths among a few errors. *Caution* and Jonson should never be coupled together; the quality, whatever be its value, was unfortunately unknown to him: his whole history proves that he was open and unsuspecting; eager to trust, and confident no less of the sincerity than of the affection of his associates. Whalley adds that "Jonson was sparing in his commendations of the works of others: but that when he commends, he commends with warmth and sincerity, and that a man of sense is cautious of giving characters," &c. But here again, he should have ascertained the existence of the fact, before he proceeded to account for it.—It is by no means "true," as he expresses it, that Jonson was sparing of his commendations:[6] on the contrary, as has been more than once observed, he was lavish of them; and there are *far more* laudatory poems by him than by any writer of the age. Sufficient proofs of this will be found in the succeeding volumes, and Whalley must have studied his author with little attention not to discover that too great a promptitude to praise, was one of his besetting faults.

"This sparingness (continues the biographer) probably gave occasion to accuse him of envy." The *sparingness*, as we have just seen, exists only in the imagination of the critics; but (suppose it to be real) why should a canon of this nature be enforced against

[6] Whalley found this in Langbaine: but when the facts are at hand, it is worse than folly to copy the mistakes of former writers. Langbaine has, unfortunately, too many of these blunders: he observes, for instance, from Marston's publisher, that this poet "is free from all ribaldry, obscenity," &c. and he is followed by the editors of the *Bio. Dram.* the *Theatrum Poetarum*, the *Gen. Dict.* &c.—whereas, we have but to open his works to be convinced that Marston was the most scurrilous, filthy, and obscene writer of his time. Such is the negligence, or ignorance of those who undertake to treat of our dramatic history!

Digitized by Google

Jonson, which was never applied to any other person? If silence be a proof of envy, what becomes of Shakspeare! With a single exception,[7] I cannot discover that he ever mentioned one of his contemporaries with commendation, or bestowed a line of praise on any publication of his time. Yet he is spoken of (and no doubt justly,) as the soul of liberality; while our author, who found something to approve in every work that appeared, and praised almost every writer by name, is constantly described as envious of all around him, and sedulously engaged in decrying their merits.

"In conclusion," says Whalley, "he is accused of jealousy and ill-nature." It is well that we are arrived at the last of his bad qualities:—but in sober truth they seem to be charged on him with as little justice as the rest. Of what or of whom could he be "jealous"? From the accession to the death of James, which comprehends almost the whole period of his active life, he was, as has already appeared, the "beloved servant" of his prince, the companion and friend of the nobility and gentry, and the acknowledged head of the learned part of society. None but those who have looked into the literary memoirs of his age, published as well as unpublished, can form a correct idea of the frequency with which he is named, and the intimacy of his connection with the most esteemed writers of the time. Of "ill-nature," he does not appear to have had a spark in him: a constitutional warmth of temper, and great quickness of feeling gave indeed a tone of bluntness to his language: but it went no farther; and while many proofs of the fervour of his friendship may be cited, his whole life does not furnish an

[7] He joined with Jonson in some commendatory verses printed at the end of a little volume of poetry by Robert Chester.

Digitized by Google

instance of one unkind act.[8] He adopted a proud and overbearing tone when speaking of his enemies; —but has it ever been inquired who these enemies were? As far as we are enabled to judge, they consisted principally of obscure actors and writers, who attacked him at his entrance into public life with a degree of wanton hostility which his subsequent success embittered and envenomed: add to this, that they are spoken of in the mass, and can seldom be recognized but when in their impatience of truth, they start forward, individually, and claim the resemblance. Opposed to these, he was not likely to be nice in his selection of terms; and a more temperate and modest person than our author, might have felt a little spleen at being called from the studies which he loved, to defend himself against such antagonists: but his general deportment was open; his fits of anger, if violent, were momentary, and his disposition placable, and kind.

Age and infirmity had little effect upon the general bent of his temper. Though his prevailing complaint, which was of a paralytic nature, must have occasionally affected his mind, and debilitated his understanding, yet he continued frank and sociable to the end. The last circumstance recorded of him, is to be found in a letter of Howell to sir Tho. Hawkins,[9] from which it appears, that at a "solemn supper given by the poet, when good company, excellent cheer, choice wine, and jovial welcome, had opened

[8] After what has been said of his "ill-nature," it will scarcely be believed that, in all his writings, while hundreds of contemporary names are introduced with praise, there are not half a dozen to be found accompanied by any mark of reprobation: indeed I recollect no person of any note, but Inigo Jones, whom he has satirized by name.

[9] The date is April 1636; but it should probably be corrected, as should the next letter respecting Jonson, also dated 1636, to 1637, for it speaks of his death.

Digitized by Google

his heart, and loosened his tongue, he began to raise himself at the expense of others." This incidental trait, in the closing scene of his life, is, with the usual candour of his biographers, eagerly seized upon as "the leading feature of his character." It was not thus, however, that Howell thought, and acted:—"for my part," he says, "I am content to dispense with this Roman infirmity of Ben, now time hath snowed upon his pericranium." He nowhere hints that this was the ordinary conduct of Jonson; much less that it had been the practice of his better days. And if, (as Mr. Gilchrist justly observes,) "when he was old and bed-ridden, and his former vigour fled, he dwelt with some degree of fondness on his early efforts; if he experienced some fears, lest

——— 'fickle fame
Should twine round some new minion's head,
The fading wreath for which he bled,'—

it will not be necessary to have attained his eminence to admit, that these were apprehensions which might be entertained by him without any violent impeachment of his moral character."

From a retrospect of what has been said, an opinion may be formed of the frailties and defects, as well as of the excellences of this eminent man, without much hazard of error:—and I must have made a bad estimate of the human powers as well as of the human heart, if the latter be not found to preponderate; and if some degree of regret be not expressed by many of those, whom the ignorance or malice of his enemies has hitherto encouraged to calumniate his name.

It yet remains to say a few words on his poetical character; which may, perhaps, be more correctly appreciated if we take a cursory view of the state of dramatic literature, at the period of his first appearance as a writer.

Digitized by Google

The long reign of Elizabeth, though sufficiently agitated to keep the mind alert, was yet a season of comparative stability and peace. The nobility, who had been nursed in domestic turbulence, for which there was now no place, and the more active spirits among the gentry, for whom entertainment could no longer be found in feudal grandeur and hospitality, took advantage of the diversity of employment happily opened, and spread themselves in every direction. They put forth, in the language of Shakspeare,

> "Some to the wars, to try their fortunes there;
> Some to discover islands far away;
> Some to the studious universities;"———

and the effect of these various pursuits was speedily discernible. The feelings narrowed and embittered in household feuds, expanded and purified themselves in distant warfare, and a high sense of honour and generosity, and chivalrous valour, ran with electric speed from bosom to bosom, on the return of the first adventurers in the Flemish campaigns: while the wonderful reports of discoveries, by the intrepid mariners who opened the route since so successfully pursued, faithfully committed to writing, and acting at once upon the cupidity and curiosity of the times, produced an inconceivable effect in diffusing a thirst for novelties among a people, who, no longer driven in hostile array to destroy one another, and combat for interests in which they took little concern, had leisure for looking around them, and consulting their own amusement.

The fluctuating state of religion, from the incoherent Reformation of Henry VIII. to the Protestantism of Edward, the relapse into Popery under Mary, and the return to a purer faith with Elizabeth, interested the hopes and fears of the nation in an extraordinary degree, and while it invigorated the

Digitized by Google

fancy, improved the understanding, by making a certain portion of literature necessary to those who contended on either side of this important question. About the middle of Elizabeth's reign, the ardour of theological controversy appears to have suffered a considerable abatement, in consequence, perhaps, of the marked preponderancy of the Protestant cause: the impulse which had been communicated, however, continued to act upon the public mind, and a craving for mental enjoyment was very widely diffused. The *Mysteries*, which were indissolubly connected with the old superstitions; and even the *Moralities* (many of which were not without merit,) were yet of too rude a nature, in the present improved state of information, to afford much rational delight.—But this "craving" was most sensibly felt in the metropolis, which began about this time to increase rapidly in population and interest. England, in fact, had been improving from the time of Henry VII.; the middle class of society had, in almost every county, acquired wealth by trade and commerce, and with it that propensity to dissipation and amusement, and that love of litigation, which always attend the first steps to consequence among a rising people. This brought numbers to the capital at particular seasons of the year, for whom it was desirable to provide entertainment; and happily caterers of every description were at hand. Many of those who had probably entered on a learned education, with a view of being received into the munificent establishments of the old religion, were, by the destruction of monasteries, &c. abandoned to their fortunes, and compelled to seek other modes of subsistence. The taste for reading was sufficiently general to warrant a reliance, in some degree, on the profits of the press; and London possessed allurements of a powerful nature for the literary adventurer. Many young men of abilities,

Digitized by Google

therefore, deserted the colleges, and flocked to the metropolis, to procure the means of enjoying its advantages by their talents, now first become a source of regular profit. Translation was the great resource, and Spain and Italy supplied the principal part of the materials. The romances, novels, and poems of both countries, more especially those of the latter, at first *done* into English, and, when practice had given somewhat of hardihood, imitated and varied in every possible form, were poured forth with a rapidity which it would be difficult to describe or credit. Meanwhile, a humbler class of writers, or rather of performers, for it is more than probable that both professions were united in the same person, were insensibly gaining upon the public attention by rude attempts at the drama, which they exhibited to admiring crowds in the galleries of inn-yards, halls, and such vacant rooms as they could most readily procure.

The popularity of these entertainments quickly attracted the notice of those who were already in some degree of credit with the town for their writings, and opened to view a source of emolument superior to that of their present occupation: they turned their thoughts therefore to the stage, and though their plays were yet unformed and rude, they boasted an evident superiority over those of their immediate predecessors. Small theatres now rose in various parts of the city. Green, Nashe, Lily, Peele, Marlow, Kyd, Lodge, and others, all wrote for them, and irritated and gratified the public curiosity by an endless succession of pieces, of which few perhaps were wholly destitute of merit. Compared with the unlettered and ignorant race which they supplanted, these men must have appeared to their contemporaries as very extraordinary writers, and hence we may account for the lavish praise which they received in their own times, and which, with respect to some

Digitized by Google

of them, was more fairly obtained than we now seem inclined to allow. Be they what they may, however, they left in the tiring-rooms of the several theatres a countless number of dramas which those who came immediately after them, Munday, Chettle, Hathaway, &c. who, with more knowledge of the stage, fell beneath them in genius and learning, found sufficient encouragement in adapting to the improved state of the times.

It was soon after this period that Shakspeare reached London; and his first employ, like that of most of the poets his contemporaries, was the amending of the productions of others. Jonson followed at no long interval of time, and had recourse to the same means of procuring a subsistence. Shakspeare happily formed a permanent connection with one company, for whom he wrote and acted; while Jonson was compelled to carry his talents from theatre to theatre, as they were required, and had perhaps as seldom the choice as the conduct of his subject.

"From whatever cause it may have arisen, (Mr. Malone says) dramatic poetry a little before Shakspeare appeared, certainly assumed a better though still an exceptionable form." The cause is sufficiently apparent in the education which Peele, Marlow, and others whom he names, had received at the two Universities, and in the acknowledged genius which they possessed. Peele and Marlow had exquisite feelings for poetry; both excelled in description, to which the former lent beauty, and the latter sublimity, though they occasionally fell into meanness or bombast. Green abounded in narrative, Lodge had humour, and Nash an inexhaustible vein of caustic raillery, never yet surpassed. Even the quaint pedantry of Lily was not without merit, and we are indebted to it for many of the pleasantest parodies of Shakspeare. It was impossible that such

Digitized by Google

men should write in vain, or that those who had witnessed the effect of their productions should return to the former puerilities. The form of their dramas, as Mr. Malone says, was "exceptionable;" but much was done, and master spirits were now at hand to set the seal of perfection to what had been so auspiciously begun. The wonderful powers of Shakspeare, though then but carelessly displayed, must have attracted notice, and prompted the rival theatres to exertions of the most strenuous kind. The demand for novelty was incessant, and the race of dramatic writers was thus multiplied beyond credibility.

It is not easy to ascertain with any precision how long Shakspeare had been in possession of the stage when Jonson commenced his dramatic career. Mr. Malone and Mr. G. Chalmers differ as to the period of his first essay, which is placed by the former in 1589, and by the latter two years later. The matter is of no great moment, for the production of such a drama as the *First Part of Henry* VI. (which is the point in dispute) can confer no distinction on any abilities whatever; but in 1593, when Jonson, then in his nineteenth year, had begun to write for the theatres, he was rapidly advancing to pre-eminence.

It is somewhat singular that the literary characters who immediately preceded Jonson, should have made no improvement in the construction of their fables; but the plot of *Tamburlaine* is not a whit more regular, or skilful than that of *Gorboduc* or *Locrine*. Beyond Seneca, these writers seldom appear to have looked; and from him they drew little but the tameness of his dialogue, and the inflation of his sentiments: their serious scenes were still histories, and sometimes lives, and their comic ones, though replete with grotesque humour, were without dependence, object or end. To reform this seemed worthy of

Digitized by Google

Jonson, and to this his earliest as well as his latest efforts were directed. However great might be the talents and genius now employed on the stage, he could not but see that an opening was still left for the introduction of a more regular drama than had hitherto appeared. The superiority of the ancients in this respect was forcibly impressed on his young and ardent mind; and though his admiration of their productions might be occasionally carried too far, it led to beneficial results. "The poets (Whalley says) when Jonson first appeared, generally drew their plots from some romance, or novel," (or from the rude annals of domestic warfare,) "and from thence also they derived the different incidents of the various scenes, and the resemblance between the copy and the original was every way exact. The same wildness and extravagance of fable prevailed in both, all the absurdities of the story being faithfully transcribed into the play."[1] Anomalies like these, our author, to whom the truth and simplicity of the ancient stage were already familiar, must have regarded with no very favourable eye, and he had no sooner acquired a little credit with the managers, than he resolved to embody his own conceptions, and model his future pieces upon the plan of his classic masters. For this purpose, it was necessary, that he should invent his own plots. We are not acquainted with his earliest essays; but the piece which stands at the head of his printed works exhibited no unfavourable specimen of his judgment, taste, and learning; and was, in fact, the first regular comedy in the English language.

So much has been incidentally said of our author's dramatic powers, in various parts of these volumes, that a very cursory notice of them is required here; little more, in fact, appears necessary, than a brief

[1] Life of Jonson, p. vii.

Digitized by Google

mention of those qualities by which he was chiefly distinguished.

To do Jonson full justice, we must regard him in the light in which he evidently viewed himself, that of a moral satirist. If the comedies of the contemporaries of his early days effected any beneficial purpose; if they led to the exposure and detestation of any evil quality, or the correction of any prevalent folly, it was by accident, not design; but with Jonson this was the primary object. We see it in the first play which he is known to have written; and he has himself called our attention to the same circumstance in that which he produced at "the close and shutting up of his circle."

With this aim in view, Jonson came to the theatre possessed of many advantages. We may collect from *the Case is Altered*, and *Every Man in his Humour*, that he was recent from the study of Plautus and Terence: but this was little; all the stores of ancient literature were open to him, and he was familiar not only with the perfect productions of the Greek dramatists, but with the fragments which lie scattered among the works of the sophists and grammarians, and which, in his days, were not to be found without much cost and labour. Nor was he merely learned; for he appears to have entered with the same ardour into the productions of his own times, and to have acquired a very considerable degree of information on every topic connected with the arts then known and cultivated. Nature had besides given him a quick and almost intuitive faculty of discerning the ridiculous, a powerful and original vein of humour, and a genius, if not sublime, yet occasionally so raised by intense contemplation of the sublimest models, as to bear no very distant resemblance of it.

It has been the practice of the poet's biographers to institute a comparison between him and Shak-

Digitized by Google

speare. These parallels have not been always "after the manner of Plutarch;" but indeed, their utility in any case will not be very apparent; unless it should be admitted, that Shakspeare is best set off by throwing every object brought near him into shade. Shakspeare wants no light but his own. As he never has been equalled, and in all human probability never will be equalled, it seems an invidious employ, at best, to speculate minutely on the precise degree in which others fell short of him. Let him with his own Julius Cæsar *bestride the narrow world like a colossus;* that is his due; but let not the rest be compelled to *walk under his huge legs, and peep about to find themselves dishonourable graves.*—"Putting aside, therefore, (as Cumberland says,) any further mention of Shakspeare, who was a poet out of all rule, and beyond all compass of criticism, one whose excellencies are above comparison, and whose errors beyond number,"[2] I return to our author.

The judgment of Jonson was correct and severe, and his knowledge of human nature extensive and profound. He was familiar with the various combinations of the humours and affections, and with the nice and evanescent tints by which the extremes of opposing qualities melt into one another, and are lost to the vulgar eye: but the art which he possessed in perfection, was that of marking in the happiest manner the different shades of the same quality, in different minds, so as to discriminate the voluptuous from the voluptuous the covetous from the covetous, &c.

In what Hurd calls "picturing," he was excellent. His characters are delineated with a breadth and vigour as well as truth that display a master hand; his figures stand prominent on the canvas, bold and muscular, though not elegant; his attitudes, though

[2] *Observ.* No. lxxv.

Digitized by Google

sometimes ungraceful, are always just, while his strict observation of proportion (in which he was eminently skilled,) occasionally mellowed the hard and rigid tone of his colouring, and by the mere force of symmetry gave a warmth to the whole, as pleasing as it was unexpected. Such, in a word, was his success, that it may be doubted whether he has been surpassed or even equalled by any of those who have attempted to tread in his steps. The striking failure of Decker in Captain Tucca has been already noticed; that of Congreve in Noll Bluff, is still more marked. Congreve designed it, Whalley says, for an imitation of Bobadil: but Noll is a beaten idiot, a character too contemptible for farce, and fit only to amuse the rabble round the stage of a mountebank. Even Ford, if we can suppose for a moment that Shakspeare had Kitely in view, will scarcely be allowed to be either so just, so natural, or so respectable a character as his prototype.

In the plots of his comedies, which were constructed from his own materials, he is deserving of undisputed praise. Without violence, without, indeed, any visible effort, the various events of the story are so linked together, that they have the appearance of accidental introduction; yet they all contribute to the main design, and support that just harmony which alone constitutes a perfect fable. Such, in fact, is the rigid accuracy of his plans, that it requires a constant and almost painful attention to trace out their various bearings and dependencies. Nothing is left to chance; before he sat down to write, he had evidently arranged every circumstance in his mind; preparations are made for incidents which do not immediately occur, and hints are dropped which can only be comprehended, at the unravelling of the piece. The play does not end with Jonson, because the fifth act is come to a con-

Digitized by Google

clusion; nor are the most important events precipitated, and the most violent revolutions of character suddenly effected, because the progress of the story has involved the poet in difficulties from which he cannot otherwise extricate himself. This praise, whatever be its worth, is enhanced by the rigid attention paid to the unities; to say nothing of those of place and character, that of time is so well observed in most of his comedies, that the representation occupies scarcely an hour more on the stage than the action would require in real life.

With such extraordinary requisites for the stage, joined to a strain of poetry always manly, frequently lofty, and sometimes almost sublime, it may, at first, appear strange that his dramas are not more in vogue; but a little attention to his peculiar modes and habits of thinking will, perhaps, enable us in some measure to account for it. The grace and urbanity which mark his lighter pieces he laid aside whenever he approached the stage, and put on the censor with the sock. This system (whether wise or unwise,) naturally led to circumstances which affect his popularity as a writer; he was obliged, as one of his critics justly observes, "to hunt down his own characters," and, to continue the metaphor, he was frequently carried too far in the chase.

But there are other causes which render his comedies less amusing than the masterly skill employed upon them would seem to warrant our expecting. Jonson was the painter of humours not of passions. It was not his object (supposing it to have been in his power) to assume a leading passion, and so mix and qualify it with others incidental to our common nature, as to produce a being instantly recognized as one of our kind. Generally speaking, his characters have but one predominating quality: his merit (whatever it be) consists in the felicity

Digitized by Google

with which he combines a certain number of such personages, distinct from one another, into a well ordered and regular plot, dexterously preserving the unities of time and place, and exhibiting all the probabilities which the most rigid admirer of the ancient models could possibly demand. Passions indeed, like humours, may be unamiable; but they can scarcely be uninteresting. There is a natural loftiness and swelling in ambition, love, hatred, &c. which fills the mind, and, when tempered with the gentler feelings, interests while it agitates. Humours are far less tractable. If they fortunately happen to contain in themselves the seeds of ridicule; then indeed, like the solemn vanity of Bobadil and the fantastic gravity of Puntarvolo, they become the source of infinite amusement; but this must not always be looked for: nor should we degrade Jonson by considering him in the light of a dramatic writer, bound, like the miserable hirelings of the modern stage, to produce a certain *quantum* of laughter. Many humours and modes of common life are neither amusing in themselves, nor capable of being made so by any extraneous ingenuity whatever: the vapourers in *Bartholomew Fair*, and the jeerers in the *Staple of News* are instances in point. — But further, Jonson would have defeated his own purpose, if he had attempted to elicit entertainment from them: he wished to exhibit them in an odious and disgusting light, and thus to extirpate what he considered as pests, from the commerce of real life. It was in the character of the poet to bring forward such nuisances as interrupted the peace, or disturbed the happiness of private society; and he is therefore careful to warn the audience, in his occasional addresses, that it is less his aim to *make their cheeks red* with laughter than to feast their understanding, and minister to their rational improvement. "At

Digitized by Google

all the theatres," says Mr. Malone, (*Shak.* vol. ii. p. 177.) "it appears that noise and shew were what chiefly attracted an audience." Of these Jonson had little; indeed, he always speaks of them with dislike: and he was so sensible that he must be heard with attention to effect that *profit* which he professed to mingle with *delight*, that his prologues are invariably directed to this end.

There is yet another obstacle to the poet's popularity, besides the unamiable and uninteresting nature of some of his characters, namely a want of just discrimination. He seems to have been deficient in that true tact or feeling of propriety which Shakspeare possessed in full excellence. He appears to have had an equal value for all his characters, and he labours upon the most unimportant and even disagreeable of them with the same fond and paternal assiduity which accompanies his happiest efforts. He seldom appears to think that he has said enough; he does not perceive that he has wearied his audience, and that all attention is withdrawn from his exertions: and he continues like the unfortunate lutanist of Dryden, to finger his instrument long after it has ceased to make music to any ear but his own.

What has been said applies chiefly to his comedies. His tragedies, of which two only are come down to us, do not call for much additional remark. Both are taken from the Roman story, and he has apparently succeeded in his principal object, which was to exhibit the characters of the drama to the spectators of his days, precisely as they appeared to those of their own. The plan was scholastic, but it was not judicious. The difference between the dramatis personæ and the spectators was too wide; and the very accuracy to which he aspired would seem to take away much of the power of pleasing. Had he drawn men instead of Romans, his success

Digitized by Google

might have been more assured; but the ideas, the language, the allusions could only be readily caught by the contemporaries of Augustus and Tiberius; and it redounds not a little to the author's praise, that he has familiarised us, in some measure, to the living features of an age so distant from our own.

Hurd, who is seldom just to our author, has entered into an elaborate examination of his *Catiline* and *Sejanus;* both of which he condemns. It would be tedious to repeat his observations; but the object of them is to shew that as the laws of the drama confine the poet to a particular action, it is wrong to dwell on its concomitant circumstances. The critic has totally mistaken the nature of these pieces. He appears to be thinking of the Athenian, instead of the English stage. Jonson's tragedies are not confined to one great event; they are, in fact, like those of Shakspeare, whom he probably had in view, histories, embracing an indefinite period of time, and shifting, with the action, from place to place. Why, with his profound knowledge of the ancient models, and with that respect for them which, on other occasions, he appears so forward to enforce, he deviated from them so widely in these instances, it is, perhaps, vain to inquire. He had adverted to this, and, probably, accounted for it, in his "Observations on the *Art of Poetry;*" but these are unfortunately lost; and we can only discover that the motives which influenced him in the conduct of his earliest tragedies, remained in force when, at the close of life, he drew out the plot of his *Mortimer*, which has all the irregularity of *Catiline* and *Sejanus.*

Hurd has justly objected to the protracted conclusion of *Sejanus.* Undoubtedly the curtain should have dropped before the entrance of Terentius. Jonson was so sensible of his error in this respect,

Digitized by Google

that he never lingered over the catastrophe of any of his subsequent pieces. In his censure of the chorus, the critic is not so correct. Jonson expressly disclaims all intention of imitating the chorus of the ancient tragedy, for which, as he says, the English stage could neither afford "state nor splendour;" the remarks, therefore, do not apply.—The chorus of *Catiline* (for *Sejanus* has none,) was never sung, nor intended to be sung, on the stage; it is, in fact, a simple string of moral reflections arising from the subject, as contemplated in the closet; appropriated to no character, but appended to the play, in mere conformity with the practice of his times.

The Masques and Entertainments of Jonson must not be overlooked. In the composition of these he greatly delighted, and was, as he justly says of himself, an artificer. With him they began, and with him they may be said to have ended; for I recollect but few after his time, intitled to any particular degree of praise, with the exception of Comus, of whose poetical excellence (for, as a masque, it is defective,) it is scarcely possible to speak too highly.

Pageants and masquerades had long been sufficiently familiar to the people of this country. The latter were somewhat more grotesque, perhaps, than those of the present day; but they had no distinguishing feature, and existed in much the same form here, as in every other part of Catholic Europe: having in fact one common origin, that of the Processions, which, though seriously, and even piously set on foot, were too commonly tumultuous, farcical, and profane. Pageants (I do not speak of those proud displays of pasteboard giants and monsters which amazed the good citizens on holidays) were the reliques of knight-errantry. The shows were costly and magnificent, but tasteless and laborious,

Digitized by Google

consisting principally of a triumph, *i. e.* a grand entry of knights decorated with all the pomp of those gaudy days; broken by an interlude taken from some tender adventure of Arthur and his knights, or some pedantic allegory in that store-house of grave absurdity, the *Romance of the Rose*, in which the pains and pleasures of a love-suit were personified, and Hope and Fear, and Jealousy and Joy fiercely assailed in castles and towers with fantastic names. In these boisterous amusements the ladies bore no great part, though they were sometimes called upon to advance "in measure" to the storm of some refractory Passion or Affection.

Warton says that these shows, which he improperly terms masques, attained their greatest height under Henry VIII. Certain it is that, during the earlier years of this licentious tyrant, the court exhibited an unusual degree of splendour, but neither then, nor during the life of Elizabeth, did the masque acquire that unity of design, that exclusive character which it assumed on the accession of James. With the diffusion of knowledge and taste came the desire of something more worthy the name of courtly entertainment than the dull and unnatural allegories of the metaphysical romance, or the simple introduction of an interlude of "baboons and satyrs."

James had more literature than taste or elegance; but he was frank and sociable; and inclined to expensive shows. What he wanted, however, his queen possessed in full excellence. She was, Sully says, "a bold and enterprising woman;" she loved pomp and understood it, and, above all, she was fond of masques and revels.—She aspired to convert Whitehall, which had lately been another cave of Trophonius, into a temple of delight; for this purpose, she called around her the most accomplished of the no-

Digitized by Google

bility, and associated them with her in those splendid amusements which she proposed to create, and which alone she could fully enjoy, as she never was familiar with the language. The poetical powers of our author were not unknown to her, for she had witnessed them at Althorpe and elsewhere, and she seems to have engaged him to embody her conceptions, shortly after she arrived at Whitehall.

The Masque, as it attained its highest degree of excellence in the hands of Jonson, admitted of dialogue, singing, and dancing:—these were not independent of one another, as in the entertainments of the old court, but combined, by the introduction of some ingenious fable, into an harmonious whole. The ground-work was assumed at will; but our author, to whom the whole mythology of Greece and Rome lay open, generally drew his personages from that inexhaustible treasury of elegance and beauty: having formed the plan, he called in the aid of the sister arts; for the essence of the masque was pomp and glory, and it could only breathe in the atmosphere of a court. Thus, while the stage was in a state of absolute nudity, moveable scenery of the most costly and splendid kind was lavished on the masque, the most celebrated masters were employed on the songs and dances, and all that the kingdom afforded of vocal and instrumental excellence was employed to embellish the exhibition.

Thus magnificently constructed, the masque was not committed to ordinary performers. It was composed, as lord Bacon says, for princes, and by princes it was played. The prime nobility of both sexes, led on by James and his Queen, took upon themselves the respective characters; and it may be justly questioned whether a nobler display of grace and elegance and beauty was ever beheld than appeared in the masques of Jonson. The songs in these entertainments were

Digitized by Google

probably entrusted to professional men; but the dialogue, and above all, the dances, which were adapted to the fable, and not acquired without much study and practice, were executed by the court themselves. The skill with which these ornaments were designed, and the inexpressible grace with which they were executed, appear to have left a vivid impression on the poet's mind; and there is, accordingly, no part of his description in which he seems to labour so much for adequate language to mark his admiration, as that of the dances.

> "In curious knots and mazes so,
> The Spring, at first, was taught to go;
> And Zephyr, when he came to woo
> His Flora, had their motions too:
> And thus did Venus learn to lead
> The Idalian brawls, and so to tread,
> As if the wind, not she, did walk,
> Nor press'd a flower, nor bow'd a stalk."

It is after witnessing the "measures" here so beautifully delineated that Aurora thus interrupts the performers——

> "I was not wearier where I lay,
> By frozen Tithon's side, to-night,
> Than I am willing now to stay,
> And be a part of your delight:
> But I am urged by the Day,
> Against my will, to bid you come away."

While Jonson thus laboured to perfect the more elegant parts of these gay fancies, he did not forget to provide amusements of another kind, which he called Antimasques, (parodies, or opposites of the main masque,) borrowed, it would seem, from the old masquerade, and already familiar to the people. These were calculated to diversify the entertainment, and to afford a breathing time to the principal performers. The poet was here tied to no rules; he might be as wild and extravagant as he pleased: the

Digitized by Google

whole world of fancy was before him; "Satyres, Fooles, Wildemen, Antiques, Ethiopes, Pigmies and Beastes," as lord Bacon has it, (with an eye perhaps to our author,) came trooping at his call. These were probably played by the menials of the palace, assisted by actors from the regular theatres. In this part of the plot Jonson stands almost alone: his antimasques are not, like those of his contemporaries, mere extravagancies, independent of the main story; generally speaking, they serve to promote or illustrate it, however fantastic they appear, and are not unfrequently the vehicle of useful satire, conveyed with equal freedom and humour. Whatever they were, however, they were the occasion of much mirth: they were eagerly "hearkened after," as the cook says in *Neptune's Triumph*, and always received with pleasure.

In these devices, as has been already observed, our author took great delight, and during the life of his royal patron, never failed to exert his best faculties on the composition of them. "Had nature (says Cumberland) been as liberal in her gifts to Jonson as learning was in opening her stores to his acquirements, the world might have seen a poet, to whom there had been nothing since the days of Homer, *aut simile aut secundum*."[3] But nature had been no stepmother to Jonson; and when the critic adds, that the poet "stocked his mind with such a mass of other men's thoughts that his imagination had not power to struggle through the crowd," he does not perceive that he has taken up a different question, and proved no part of what he supposed himself to have decided.—But, omitting the consideration of this, whatever may be the case of the poet in his severer studies, in his masques his imagination is neither oppressed nor obscured. In these, he makes

[3] Critique on *Every Man in his Humour*, p. lii.

Digitized by Google

his appearance like his own DELIGHT, "accompanied with Grace, Love, Harmony, Revel, Sport, and Laughter." If, as the critic will have it, he was a "literary behemoth," it must be granted that here, at least, he *writhed his lithe proboscis* with playfulness and ease. His unbounded learning is merely an adjunct to his fancy. His mythological personages, amid the most scrupulous preservation of their respective attributes, move with elasticity and vigour; and while the dialogue is distinguished by a masculine strength and freedom, the lyrical part of these gay pastimes is clothed with all the richness and luxuriance of poetry. Araspes, the friend and confident of Cyrus, could only account for his perfidy to the man whom he loved and revered, by supposing that he had two souls, one prompting him to evil, the other to good. A notion of a similar kind will sometimes suggest itself to the reader of Jonson. In his tragedies he was cautious and strict, tremblingly apprehensive of starting from the bounds of regularity, and constantly rejecting every idea which was not supplied by the authorities before him: in some of his comedies too, and in several of his longer poems the same hardness and severity are displayed; he perseveres in the ungrateful task of compression till the finer parts of his machinery are deprived of play, and the whole stiffened, cramped, and impaired: but no sooner has he taken down his lyre, no sooner touched on his lighter pieces, than all is changed as if by magic, and he seems a new person. His genius awakes at once, his imagination becomes fertile, ardent, versatile, and excursive; his taste pure and elegant; and all his faculties attuned to sprightliness and pleasure.

Such were the Masques of Jonson, in which, as Mr. Malone says, "the wretched taste of those times found amusement." That James and his court de-

Digitized by Google

lighted in them cannot be doubted, and we have only to open the Memoirs of Winwood and others to discover with what interest they were followed by the nobility of both sexes.—Can we wonder at this? There were few entertainments of a public kind at which they could appear, and none in which they could participate. Here all was worthy of their hours of relaxation.[4] Mythologues of classic purity, in which, as Hurd observes, the soundest moral lessons came recommended by the charm of numbers, were set forth with all the splendour of royalty, while Jones and Lanier, and Lawes and Ferrabosco lavished all the grace and elegance of their respective arts on the embellishment of the entertainment.

But in what was "the taste of the times *wretched*?" In poetry, painting, architecture, they have not since been equalled; in theology, moral philosophy, they are not even now surpassed; and it ill becomes us, who live in an age which can scarcely produce a Bartholomew Fair farce, to arraign the taste of a period which possessed a cluster of writers, of whom the meanest would now be esteemed a prodigy.—And why is it assumed that the followers of the court of James were deficient in what Mr. Malone is pleased to call taste? To say nothing of the men, (who were trained to a high sense of decorum and intellectual discernment under Elizabeth,) the Veres, the Wroths, the Derbys, the Bedfords, the Rutlands, the Cliffords, and the Arundels, who danced in the fairy rings, in the gay and gallant circles of these enchanting devices, of which our most splendid shows are, at best, but beggarly parodies, were fully as accomplished in

[4] "Masques (says one of the completest gentlemen of that age), the courtly recreations of gallant gentlemen and ladies of honour, striving to exceed one the other in their measures and changes, and in their repasts of wit, have been beyond the power of envy to disgrace." Higford's *Institution of a Gentleman.*

Digitized by Google

every internal and external grace as those who, in our days, have succeeded to their names and honours.

Mr. Malone sets down the masques of James, (probably because they were written by Jonson,) as "bungling shews;" when he has to speak of one produced by Heywood in 1636, he is then disposed to admit that the "art of scenery" was somewhat improved! This is merely absurd. The art had attained its utmost degree of excellence at the death of this monarch; it declined under his successor; and notwithstanding all the efforts of Inigo Jones, and his poet, master Aurelian Townshend, it gradually lost its distinguishing characteristics, and fell back into the pageant and masquerade from which the genius and learning of our author had so happily reclaimed it.

A few years after the Restoration, an attempt was made by Charles II, to revive this species of entertainment. The daughter of James II. (then duke of York,) and many of the young nobility of both sexes, appeared in a masque written by Crowne, called *Calisto:* but the passion did not spread; nor was it possible that it should. Crowne, though not altogether illiterate, was devoid of fancy, and the court itself was too frivolous, too ignorant, and too licentious for the enjoyment of elegant and rational pleasures. We hear of the Masque no more.

Some time elapsed, after the death of our author, before any of his later productions appeared; two small editions of his minor pieces were at length sent to the press in 1640, and in the subsequent year a wretched reprint of the first folio, and a second volume of the same size, containing his dramatic pieces from 1612, several masques, and all that could be found of his occasional poetry, were published together. Several of the comedies appear to have been taken from the prompter's book, and surreptitiously

Digitized by Google

printed (but not published) during the author's life; how the rest were procured, I know not.

Such of his dramas as were revived at the Restoration were printed separately; and in 1692 the whole of his writings were again collected, and published in one huge folio volume. The demand for his works must have been considerable for those days, since in 1715 the booksellers were encouraged to prepare another edition, which they gave the world in six volumes 8vo. This publication was merely a reprint of the old copy, and with this, defective as it was, the town was content till the year 1756, when a more complete edition, in seven volumes 8vo., was published by the Rev. Peter Whalley, LL. B.

Mr. Whalley had received an academical education, and he was competent, in some measure, to the undertaking. He did little, however, for the poet; the form of the old editions was rigidly observed, and though a few notes were subjoined, they were seldom of material import, and never explanatory of the author's general views, though they occasionally touched on his language. It is not a little remarkable that this gentleman, who was master of the Grammar School of Christ's Hospital, and must naturally have been somewhat conversant with the ancient writers, should not have ventured on one remark of a literary nature, every thing of this kind, which occurs in his edition, being, as I discovered with some surprise, taken from Upton and others.

Whether Whalley was diffident of himself, or the gentlemen volunteered their assistance, I have no means of knowing, but he availed himself occasionally of the aid of Sympson and Seward, (the Editors of Beaumont and Fletcher,) who led him astray, and where he would have been simply wrong, if left to himself, rendered him absurd. In one pleasant way of making notes, and swelling the bulk of the book,

Digitized by Google

they all agreed. None of them printed from the earliest editions;[5] they took up the latest which they could find, and went smoothly on till they were stopt by some palpable error of the press. This, as the clown says, *was meat and drink to them;* they immediately set themselves to conjecture what the word should be, and after a little burst of vanity, at which it is impossible to forbear a smile, they turned, for the first time, to the old copy, and invited the public to witness their sagacity, and partake in their triumph. An example or two, taken at random from Whalley, will make this clear.

"Long may he round about him see
His roses and his lilies *bloom!*
Long may his only love and he,
Joy in ideas of their own!"

"I have no objection to *bloom*, but only as it does not rhyme very exactly with *own;* I conjectured therefore that it should be *blown;* and found my conjecture authorized by the old folio."

"Valour wins applause,
That dares but to *mention* the weaker cause."

"No great applause of valour can be due to any one merely for *mentioning* the weaker side. This led me to conjecture that *maintain* was the word designed by the poet, and upon consulting the first folio, I found it so to be"! vol. v. 297.

"Your *fortress* who hath bred you to this hour.

"Fortress is an error. Mr. Sympson likewise saw the mistake, and ingeniously sent me *fautress*, which I should have made use of, had not the old folio prevented me, and read *fostress*"!

Whalley prefixed to his edition a Life of the author; not injudicious in the main; but composed in a style so uncouth and antiquated, that I could not prevail on myself to reprint it, though I have thought it my

[5] Whalley's text was that of the Booksellers' edition, in 8vo. This had been in Theobald's hands, and an incidental remark by him, of no moment whatever, here and there appeared in the margin.

Digitized by Google

duty to make a few extracts from it; chiefly, however, for the purpose of correcting the mistakes into which the writer had been led by too implicit a reliance on his authorities.

The reception of this work was sufficiently favourable to encourage the author to undertake a revision of it preparatory to a second edition. I cannot discover, however, that any substantial improvement was meditated, none at least, was introduced, and the text remained in every instance, as it stood before. The bulk of the work, indeed, was materially increased by the admission of an immense farrago of parallel passages, taken, for the most part, from the numerous republications of Shakspeare, to which the last century had given birth. He did not proceed with this revision much beyond the comedies; circumstances, with which I am but imperfectly acquainted, interrupted his literary pursuits, and this among the rest. It is said that the extravagance of a young wife involved him in pecuniary difficulties of a serious kind, and obliged him to leave his home. In this distress he was received into the house of Mr. Waldron, where he lay concealed for some time; when the place of his retreat was at length discovered, he took refuge in Flanders, where he died after a few months' residence, in the summer of 1791.

Under the hospitable roof of this worthy and amiable man, Whalley resumed the care of Jonson; but want of books, and perhaps, of sufficient composure of mind, rendered his attempts ineffectual, and the manuscript was finally abandoned to his friend; who, in the year 1792, commenced the publication of it in numbers. The success apparently fell short of the expectations of the editor, as the work was not continued beyond the second number.

Mr. Waldron neither possessed, nor pretended to

Digitized by Google

be possessed of, scholastic learning; but he was laborious, accurate, conversant with the stage, and imbued with a rational love of the ancient drama, which he had studied with success. He appears to have collated Whalley's copy with the early editions; and, on attentively retracing his steps, previously to the arrangement of the text for the present publication, I found much to approve in the caution and judgment with which he had uniformly proceeded. His friendship for Whalley, however, had led him to form far too high an estimate of that gentleman's qualifications; and beyond the revision which I have just mentioned, he seems to have contemplated no alteration of the papers left in his hands.

Many years had elapsed since the failure, last mentioned, when the re-publication of Jonson was proposed to me by Mr. George Nicol, to whom Whalley's corrected copy had been consigned by Mr. Waldron. I was well aware of the labour and difficulty of the task; but my objections were overcome by the encouragement of my friend, and I undertook the edition, confident that I was not about to encumber the public with a superfluous work, for Jonson had now been long out of the bookseller's hands.—One motive there yet was, which had some influence on my determination,—a desire, though late, to render justice to the moral character of the author, and rescue him from the calumnies of his inveterate persecutors. My mind had been prejudiced at an early period, by the commentators on our old dramas, and I verily believed, as they repeatedly assured me, that "the great object of Jonson's life was the persecution of Shakspeare," nor was it until I became acquainted with the dates of his respective performances, that I ventured to question the accuracy of the critics, or to entertain a suspicion that they were actuated by unworthy motives, and could only be relieved from the

Digitized by Google

charge of wanton malevolence, by the plea of incorrigible folly.

Previously to the arrangement of the text, it became necessary to collate the old editions. In the execution of this part of the work, the mode adopted in the revision of Massinger was carefully followed: if the approbation of the public may be trusted, no change was required.

Had any standard of orthoëpy obtained among our old writers, it might not be improper to preserve it; but to copy the vagaries of a careless press, would be an affectation of accuracy at once impertinent and unprofitable. Our author appears, indeed, to affect a derivative mode of spelling; but his attention frequently relaxes, and the variations of his text are considerable; the first folio differs from the quarto, and the second folio from both. In general, writers trusted entirely to the printers, who, on their parts, piqued themselves but little on justifying this confidence. "I never (says the author of *Father Hubbard's Tales*) wisht myself a better fortune than to fall into the hands of a true-spelling printer,"—and he was not so lucky. There seems no plausible reason for continuing to present Jonson alone to the public in the uncouth and antiquated garb of his age: the barbarous contractions, therefore, the syncopes and apocopes, which deformed the old folios, (for the quartos are remarkably free from them,) have been regulated, and in some cases removed, and the appearance of the poet's page assimilated, in a great degree, to that of his contemporaries, who spoke and wrote the same language as himself. Whalley, as has been just observed, though the modernized impressions of Shakspeare and others were before him, contented himself with simply reprinting the former text, with all its archaisms and anomalies; the same word was differently spelt in the same page, and sometimes in the same line; the

Digitized by Google

pointing was seldom disturbed, the scenes were divided as the old books divided them, and not an *exit* or *entrance* was superadded; yet it could not have escaped him that no part of this arrangement made the slightest claim to uniformity or even truth. In fact, the object of the old division would almost appear to be that of throwing every obstacle in the way of the reader, and making that which could, in no case, be easy, a matter of extreme difficulty. A certain number of the dramatis personæ are set down at long intervals, but no hint is given when they appear or disappear, individually, and much time has been expended in the obscure and humble labour of inserting a name which, after all, may not be found correctly placed. Jonson, probably, adopted this costive mode from the ancient drama, but it seems to have escaped him that the Greek and Roman stage seldom permitted more than four characters to be present at the same time; whereas he has frequently introduced (especially in his *Catiline* and *Sejanus*,) double, and sometimes treble that number. The scenery too, (by which nothing more is intended than the supposed place of action,) was every where obscure, and, in the tragedies, perplexed and involved above measure. Our author, like his contemporaries, seems, in these, to have taken advantage of the poverty of the stage, and the easy faith of the audience, to represent events in the same spot, which must, in fact, have occurred in different places. Be this as it may, an attempt has been made to specify the scene in every action; and it is necessary to intreat the indulgence of the public towards this first effort to give a *local habitation and a name*, to what before had neither. In this, I have consulted the ease of the reader, who could scarcely be expected to turn the page forward and backward to ascertain the site of every event, especially as the difficulty occurs,

Digitized by Google

for the most part, in those pieces which possess the fewest charms of sentiment, action, or language, to lure him on through doubt and obscurity to the point of elucidation. That the poet will be more read on this account, I dare not flatter myself; but I venture to hope that he will be comprehended with more facility; and, in this, I have already found my reward. Slight, however, as the effect may appear, it has not been produced without some pains;—nor should I have been able to complete it entirely to my own satisfaction, or greatly to the advantage of the reader, had I not fortunately found in Mr. Thomas Turner, (of Mr. Bulmer's Office,) a friend whose readiness to oblige was only equalled by his professional skill; and whose acquaintance with various parts of literature, far removed from the common track of reading, has been beneficially exerted through the course of this undertaking.

It appears from Mr. Whalley's correspondence, that his enlarged copy had been in the hands of Steevens, Reed, and Malone. What they took, or what they gave, I am unable to say; but my first care was to throw it all aside: my objection to an idle accumulation of examples upon every trite or indecorous expression, is by no means weakened since the publication of Massinger, though I have been openly reproved for the nakedness of my pages, and the obstinate refusal to illustrate "after the manner of Mr. Collins," the admired colloquies of Hircius and Spungius![6] What I could find of utility in my pre-

[6] After explaining myself so fully, as I thought, on this subject, it is with pain that I find myself compelled to return to it. I should think no sacrifice on my part too great, if I could but convince the grovelling editors of our old dramatists that the filth and obscenity which they so sedulously toil to explain, is better understood by ninety-nine out of every hundred readers than by themselves, and that the turpitude of corrupting the remaining one is a crime for which their ignorance offers no adequate excuse. A

Digitized by Google

decessor's observations, is retained, though with occasional variations of his language: my own notes have run to a greater length than was originally intended; but the ground was, in a manner, unbeaten. They are chiefly illustrative of obsolete phrases and customs, of personal and historical notices connected with the subject, together with such incidental touches on the character and conduct of the respective pieces, as the occasion seemed to demand. There will also be found some explanatory remarks on the language of Shakspeare,—a part of the work which should have been extended, (as there is nothing which I so much desire as to see him relieved from the ponderous ignorance of his commentators,) had I not once flattered myself that an opportunity might hereafter occur of serving him more effectually:—that day-dream is past; and I am left to regret that I was so chary of my observations.

There is little to add. Assuredly, I anticipated more gratification from the termination of this undertaking than I seem to experience. I cannot give pleasure where I once hoped to give it; and fame, or if it must be so, vanity, appears, I know not how, in colours of less seductive brightness:—the fairy vision has receded as I advanced; and the toilsome way is terminated amidst prospects of no cheering kind: I cannot conceal from myself how little has been done for an author of such exalted claims; nor how greatly I have fallen short of the justice which I once hoped to render to him. The work is now before the public. It is not exempt from errors, as will easily be discovered; and the origin of some of them may be found in the lights (all favourable to the poet) which have broken in upon me

plodding cold-blooded Arctine is despicable; a sprightly one is detestable; and both are among the worst pests of society.

Digitized by Google

since its commencement; such as it is, however, it is given with a free and independent spirit. No difficulty has been evaded, no labour shunned: neither hopes nor fears of a personal nature have had the slightest influence upon the conduct of the undertaking; what has been strongly felt has been strongly expressed; and if, before the occasional warmth of my language be challenged, the violence and injustice which I have had to repel, be examined, I shall not, in this instance at least, be alarmed at the result.

What remains is pleasure. The generosity by which I was enabled to furnish so correct a text of Massinger has accompanied me with a double portion of frankness on the present occasion. Every early addition of these dramas, and almost every copy, has been tendered to my use. Mr. Kemble, whose kindness is perpetual, opened his vast collection to me with unbounded liberality. Mr. Waldron, who has taken the warmest interest in my success, not only supplied me with much valuable matter, collected from various sources during the long period that his attention was fixed on our author, but procured from Mr. Parke and other gentlemen, notices of scattered poems, plays, &c. which have been used with advantage. Of my friend Octavius Gilchrist, no particular mention is required here; his name will be found in various parts of these volumes, in connection with information that will always be received with satisfaction. The Rev. Mr. Bandinell has been already noticed; and I have now to add the name of Mr. Philip Bliss, who forwarded my researches at the Bodleian with all the alacrity of friendship; nor must I forget Mr. Petrie, to whose kindness I have been singularly obliged, and to whom I am indebted for the knowledge of many useful MSS. in our public repositories. I forbear to mention

Digitized by Google

more—but I should do violence to my own feelings, in closing this part of the work without adding that, if the reader has derived either amusement or information from the explanatory notes diffused over these volumes, it is to the unprecedented kindness of Richard Heber, Esq. that he is mainly indebted. The liberality with which this gentleman communicates the literary treasures of his extensive collection is too well known to be particularly insisted on here; but he has claims to my thankfulness which must not be passed in silence. To open his library to all my requests was not sufficient in his eyes, he therefore spontaneously furnished me with a number of rare and valuable pieces material to my success, and with several of which I was not acquainted even by name. In diligently availing myself of these aids, I have constantly borne in mind that I was making the return most pleasing to my generous friend, though scarcely full enough to satisfy myself.

I have yet to mention the very Reverend the Dean of Westminster. Avocations of a nature far removed from studies of this kind engross his leisure; yet no one acquainted with any publication of mine, can require to be told that no part of the present work has passed the press without his anxious revision. — But with what feelings do I trace the words—*the Dean of Westminster!*—Five and forty springs have now passed over my head, since I first found Dr. Ireland, some years my junior, in our little school, at his spelling-book. During this long period, our friendship has been without a cloud; my delight in youth, my pride and consolation in age. I have followed with an interest that few can feel, and none can know, the progress of my friend from the humble state of a curate to the elevated situation which he has now reached, and in every successive change have seen, with inexpressible delight, his

Digitized by Google

reputation and the wishes of the public precede his advancement. His piety, his learning, his conscientious discharge of his sacred duties, his unwearied zeal to promote the interests of all around him, will be the theme of other times and other pens: it is sufficient for my happiness to have witnessed at the close of a career, prolonged by Infinite Goodness far beyond my expectations, the friend and companion of my heart in that dignified place, which while it renders his talents and his virtues more conspicuous, derives every advantage from their wider influence and exertion.

Digitized by Google

PROOFS OF BEN JONSON'S MALIGNITY,

FROM THE COMMENTATORS ON SHAKSPEARE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the remarks which will be found scattered over the succeeding volumes, respecting the alleged hostility of Jonson to Shakspeare, it appears to me that I should but imperfectly discharge my duty unless I presented the reader with a concentrated view of a part of the proofs by which the accusation is supposed to be made good. Our dramatic literature has been absolutely poisoned by the malice of Jonson's persecutors. Whoever brought forward an old poet offered up a victim to his fame, and this victim was invariably our author: but while it was generously admitted that the rest of his contemporaries felt his malignity only at intervals, it was universally affirmed that his abuse of Shakspeare was unremitted. Neither writer nor reader ever dreamed of questioning the accuracy of this statement; and nothing could be more amusing than the complacent simplicity with which it was handed down from Mr. Malone to Mr. Weber, from Mr. G. Chalmers to Mr. Stephen Jones.

It is to the praise of Mr. Gilchrist that he was the first person who, amidst the general outcry against Jonson, evinced sufficient honesty to investigate the truth, and sufficient courage to declare it. His little

Digitized by Google

Publication[1] startled the critics, though it could not silence them. His triumph, however, was complete; for he had justice on his side: and there is something ludicrous in the half-concessions which the force of his facts occasionally elicits from his opponents. I should have reprinted his Essay, of which I have made a liberal use, had I not hoped that he would one day give it to the world himself with the additional matter of which I know him to be possessed.

The attack on Jonson for his supposed hostility to Shakspeare appears to have commenced with Dryden. Every word that the commentators on our great poet advance respecting the mention of this hostility by contemporary writers is, in unqualified terms, A POSITIVE FALSEHOOD. Not one of the enemies of Jonson, not one of the friends of Shakspeare, drops the slightest hint of such a circumstance during the lives of these poets: on the contrary, they speak of Jonson's esteem for Shakspeare:

> "It is not fit each humble muse should make
> Thy worth his subject—
> Let learned Jonson sing a dirge for thee,
> And fill our orb with mournful harmony," &c.

Not a word of hatred, envy, jealousy, and those other amiable passions, which now make so conspicuous a figure; these were the figments of a later period:—but my present business is with the last editors of Shakspeare. Before I proceed, however, it may not be inexpedient to state my own sense of the question. It is my fixed persuasion, then, (not lightly adopted, but deduced from a wide examination of the subject,) that Jonson never received either patronage, favour, or assistance of any kind from

[1] *Examination of the charges maintained by Malone, Chalmers, and others, of Jonson's enmity, &c. towards Shakspeare.* 1808.

Digitized by Google

Shakspeare. I am further persuaded that they were friends and associates till the latter finally retired—that no feud, no jealousy ever disturbed their connection—that Shakspeare was pleased with Jonson, and that Jonson loved and admired Shakspeare. What else I have to say, will be found as the reader proceeds.

Shak. vol. i. p. 12. Mr. Malone is so eager to begin his attack on our author, that he enters upon it ere he has well opened the book. His first "labour of love" is to bring back the scurrilous falsehoods which Rowe had rejected on conviction, because he (Mr. Malone) "believes them to be strictly true," except that they are of too favourable a nature!

"Dryden, we are told by Pope, concurred with Mr. Rowe, in thinking" (observe that Rowe had cancelled the expression, and no longer thought so) "Jonson's posthumous verses on Shakspeare *sparing* and *invidious*," p. 12.

Mr. Malone's language is not very accurate. But leaving this,—Mr. Rowe does not allude to *any verses;* his opinion of Jonson's therefore is not quite so clear as the critic supposes. Rowe speaks (in the rejected paragraph) of the *Discoveries*, not of the Poem on Shakspeare's death, as Mr. Malone must have seen, if he had read either of them.——And where does Pope say "that Dryden concurred with Mr. Rowe in thinking the verses on Shakspeare *sparing* and *invidious?*" For the reader's satisfaction, I will transcribe what Mr. Pope really does say—"I cannot, for my own part, find any thing invidious or sparing in these verses; but *wonder* Mr. Dryden was of that opinion. Jonson exalts Shakspeare not only above all his contemporaries, but above Chaucer and Spenser, whom he will not allow

Digitized by Google

to be ranked with him: and challenges the name of Sophocles, Euripides, and Æschylus, nay all Greece and Rome at once to equal him," &c. *Shak.* vol. i. p. 116. It must be confessed that this is an excellent passage to prove "old Ben's *envy* of Shakspeare"! Let us say that Mr. Malone was out of luck in referring to it:—and yet, not quite so much as in referring to the next authority, which he does in the same line. "See also (he says) Mr. Steevens's *note* on those verses"—With pain I have *seen* it; and with disgust will the reader learn, that this "note of Mr. Steevens" is neither more nor less than the identical letter of Macklin's which Mr. Malone himself had previously employed nearly thirty pages in proving to be a forgery from end to end! The exposure occurs in the first volume, the "note" at the end of the second; so that Mr. Malone intrepidly hurries past his own refutation in quest of a known falsehood to bolster up a recorded lie.

"Before Shakspeare's death, Ben's envious disposition is mentioned by one of his own friends.

> "Thou'rt sound in body; but some say thy mind
> Envy doth ulcer; yet *corrupted hearts*
> *Such censurers must have.*" p. 12.

This is excellent. Does Mr. Malone suppose that the most innocent man on earth is exempt from calumny? But the line which notices the calumny, also refutes it. It is the unjust attack of Decker and others in the *Satiromastix*, brought forward merely for the sake of exposing its malice. Those who accuse you of envy, says the writer to Jonson, must *have corrupted hearts!* Is Mr. Malone content to abide by this criterion? "The mind (as Mr. Gilchrist well observes on this passage,) can picture to itself no case more mortifying than that of Mr.

Digitized by Google

Malone, who after having with unwearied industry turned up the ample dunghill of defamation, meets at last with this palpable and severe reproof of his labours."

The "friend" of our author is John Davies, the writing master, who amused himself with composing little pieces of doggrel verse on every man within the circle of his knowledge. Mr. Malone never read Jonson, and may therefore be excused for not discovering that he disclaims this "friendship."—But how is it that he has forgotten to observe that Davies was also Shakspeare's "own friend," and that he informs his "good Wil." in the following page, that people "railed at him also?" Would Mr. Malone think it just to adopt his own mode of argument, and conclude, from this passage, that Shakspeare deserved to be *railed* at?

"The following verses by one of Jonson's admirers support Mr. Rowe in what he says," (still copying what Mr. Rowe had thrown aside as unfounded,) "relative to his slowness."

> "*Scorn then their censures* who give out thy wit
> As long upon a comedy did sit
> As elephants bring forth," &c. p. 12.

And this too is excellent. The writer, (Jasper Mayne,) in a poem on Jonson's death, recommends a contempt of such censures; therefore they are called in to support a charge disclaimed by the author! But Mr. Malone proceeds with his quotation:

> "That the king's yearly butt wrote, and his wine
> Had more right than thou to thy Catiline."

Catiline was written in 1611, and the yearly butt was not conferred on Jonson till 1630, so that Mayne could not have produced a more striking proof of

Digitized by Google

the absurd malice of the poet's enemies:—but Mr. Malone sees nothing of this.

"The *Return from Parnassus* furnishes us with the earliest intimation of the *quarrel* between Jonson and Shakspeare:[2] and Fuller, who lived near enough the time to be well informed, *confirms* this account." p. 13.

I will give Fuller's words. "Many were the wit-combates between Shakspeare and Ben Jonson. I behold them like a Spanish great galleon, and an English man of war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his

[2] See p. lxii. where this quarrel is noticed. In the recent edition of Beaumont and Fletcher too, it is referred to "as a proof of Jonson's *enmity*," and called "that *strong* passage." When will this folly end?—But, true; it is a STRONG passage, a very STRONG one —but against whom? Frankly, I speak it, against Shakspeare, who, if Will Kempe be worthy of credit, wantonly interfered in a contest with which he had no concern, and ridiculed a man whose only crime (as far as related to himself) was an unbounded regard for his persecutor.

Now I am on the subject of this old play, I will just venture to inform those egregious critics that the heroes of it are laughing both at Wil. Kempe and Shakspeare. Of Shakspeare's plays they neither know nor say any thing: when they have to mention him in their own character, they speak merely of his *Lucrece* and his *Venus and Adonis*. Yet Shakspeare had then written several of his best pieces, and Jonson not one of his.

I suspect that Mr. Malone would not have been much pleased with Ingenioso and Judicio, (who are, it must be confessed, a couple of pedantic coxcombs,) if he had read what they say of our author.

"*Jud.* Ben Jonson. The wittiest fellow of a bricklayer in England.

Ingen. A mere empiric: one that gets what he hath by observation, and makes only *nature* privy to what he indites."—This is not altogether the critic's creed.

We shall now, I suppose, hear little more of Wil. Kempe—who was probably brought on the stage in a fool's cap to make mirth for the University wits; and who is dismissed, together with his associate, in a most contemptuous manner, as "a *mere leaden spout*," &c.

Digitized by Google

performances, Shakspeare, like the latter, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention." *Fuller*, vol. ii. p. 415.

These "wit-combates" then (on which Mr. Malone founds a charge of hostility,) turn out after all to be those sprightly repartees which so delighted their common friends.—The solid attacks of Jonson repelled by the quick and lively sallies of Shakspeare (great masters, as both were, of conversation,) must, indeed, have been a mental treat of the highest kind, and could have given to no one, but the commentator, an idea of malice or ill-will on either side. There is nothing visible to ordinary eyes, but the fullness of friendship, enlivened by a social meeting, and tending to hilarity and festive delight. Yet this is produced to prove Jonson's *enmity!* What idea of friendship Mr. Malone had formed, I know not; but it seems as if he thought that the conversation of all but deadly foes must, like trade-winds, *tend all one way.* Our author had other notions of friendship, and, I believe, correcter ones: he says,

> "It is an act of tyranny, not love,
> In practised friendship, wholly to approve."

Again:

> "Little know they that profess amity,
> And seek to scant her *comely liberty*,
> How much they lame her in her property."

"It is a singular circumstance that old Ben should for near two centuries have stalked on the stilts of *artificial* reputation." p. 13.

If Jonson's reputation be "artificial," then, as the poet says, is "earth's base built on stubble."—And who is it that presumes to oppose his private opinion to the universal award of "two centuries," and

Digitized by Google

ridicule the attainments of Jonson? *Sanguinis in facie—!*

Ben, however, did not trust to the praises of others. One of his admirers honestly confesses

> "he
> Of whom I write this, has prevented me,
> And boldly said so much in his own praise,
> No other pen need any trophy raise." p. 13.

This *admirer*, whom Mr. Malone, when he next mentions him, calls "Ben's *old antagonist*," p. 640, is Owen Feltham.—But what shall be said of Mr. Malone? A judicial blindness appears to have fallen upon him the instant that he approached Jonson. Deprive him of this plea, and no terms will be strong enough to describe the excess of his ignorance or his malice. The *praise* refers to our author's works. It is in the composition of his *Sejanus*, *Catiline*, and other poems mentioned by Feltham that he pronounces Jonson to have said so much in his own praise as to make the applause of his friends superfluous: and the critic expressly contrasts his conduct, in this respect, with that of the "trivial poets, whose chatterings live and fall at once."

"In vain, however, did Jonson endeavour to bully the town—by pouring out against those who preferred Shakspeare to him, *a torrent of illiberal* abuse." p. 14. To this atrocious charge, there is but one answer which occurs to me; and though that be usually wrapped up in the courtesy of a learned language, I shall not make use of it.

All this, and much more, is produced in support of a passage which the author of it had deliberately cancelled on account of its falsity; though he had every one of Mr. Malone's "proofs" before him!—We now come to another rejected paragraph, also brought back by Mr. Malone:—and the history of it is not a little amusing.

Digitized by Google

Hales of Eton was reported to have said (though the matter was not much in Hales of Eton's way,) "that there was no subject of which any person ever writ, but he would produce it much better done by Shakspeare." p. 16. This is told by Dryden, 1667. The next version is by Tate, 1680. "Our learned Hales was wont to assert that since the time of Orpheus, no common place has been touched upon, where Shakspeare has not performed as well." Next comes the illustrious Gildon, (of Dunciad memory,) and he models the story thus, from Dryden, as he says, with a salvo for the accuracy of his recollection! "Mr. Hales of Eton affirmed that he would shew all the poets of antiquity outdone by Shakspeare.—The *enemies* of Shakspeare would by no means yield to this; so that it came to a trial of skill. The place agreed on for the dispute was Mr. Hales's chamber at Eton.[3] A great many *books were sent down* by the enemies of this poet, and on the appointed day my lord Falkland, sir John Suckling, and *all the persons of quality* that had wit and learning met there, and upon a thorough disquisition of the point, the judges chosen out of this assembly unanimously gave the preference to Shakspeare, and the Greek and Roman poets were adjudged to vail at least their glory in that to the English poet." p. 17.

This stuff, which is merely worthy of Gildon,—this flocking of persons of quality to Eton, with satchels of school-books, doubled down, it may be presumed, at the proper places—as if they could read in no books but their own, or as if Hales[4] could not supply

[3] "To this *chamber* (say his biographers) Mr. Hales retired from the College in 1644, that is, seven years after Jonson's death!

[4] Hales, who was one of the first scholars of his time, is celebrated by Wood for the extensiveness of his library, and lord Clarendon says, "that Hales had a greater and better collection of books than were to be found in any private library that he ever

Digitized by Google

them—is too despicable for farther notice.—But what, the reader will say, has all this to do with Jonson? We find no mention of him whatever. A moment's patience, and he will make his appearance; for Mr. Malone has him full in view. The story now reached Rowe; and as it was discovered about this time that the praise of Shakspeare was worth nothing unless coupled with the abuse of Jonson, it puts on this form. "Mr. Hales, who had sat still some time, hearing Ben reproach Shakspeare with the want of learning, and ignorance of the antients, told him, at last," &c. Thus it stood in the first edition:—but Mr. Rowe was an honest man, and having found occasion to change his mind before the appearance of the second edition, he struck the passage out, and inserted, in its stead, "sir John Suckling, who was a professed admirer of Shakspeare,[5] had undertaken, with some warmth, his defence against Ben Jonson, when Mr. Hales," &c.——

Thus we have the fable of the *Three Black Crows!* and thus a simple observation of Mr. Hales (which, in all probability, he never made,) is dramatized, at length, into a scene of obloquy against our author! A tissue of mere dotage scarcely deserves unravelling; but it may be just observed that when Jonson was seized with his last illness, (after which he certainly never went "to Mr. Hales's chamber, at

saw:"—yet sir John Suckling, who probably never read a word of Greek in his life, must take down his own book!

[5] Where does this appear?—the only authority for the assertion is, I am confident, Suckling's *Session of the Poets*. To censure Jonson with good-humoured wit for an unlucky play, is sufficient, in the eyes of the critics, to constitute an admirer of Shakspeare.—But Suckling passed his days with the admirers of Jonson. Endymion Porter too, who was also present at this congress of sages, was an especial admirer of Jonson, though Mr. Malone and his *sportive* forger, Macklin, were not aware of it; and befriended him much in his last illness.

Digitized by Google

Eton" or elsewhere,) the two grave judges, Suckling and Falkland, who sat on the merits of all the Greek and Roman poets, and decided with such convincing effect, were, the first in the 12th and the second in the 15th year of their ages!—But the chief mistake lies with Dryden, whose memory was always subservient to the passion of the day; the words which he has put into the mouth of Mr. Hales, being, in fact, the property of Jonson. Long before Suckling and Falkland were out of leading strings, he had told the world that Shakspeare surpassed not only all his contemporary poets, but even those of Greece and Rome:[6]—and if Mr. Hales used these words, without giving the credit of them to Jonson, he was, to say the least of it, a bold plagiarist.

This stupid anecdote is thus concluded by Mr. Malone. "Let ever memorable Hales, if all his other merit be forgotten, be ever mentioned with honour for his taste and admiration of Shakspeare;"—and let Jonson, who taught him both, and who went farther in both than himself, be for ever held up to the world as the reviler, hater, and persecutor of Shakspeare alive and dead.—These last words seem to have been dropt at the press; at least, I do not find them in Mr. Malone's edition, though he has every where acted upon them.

"Antony Munday is *ridiculed* here by Ben Jonson; but he might notwithstanding be *deservedly eminent;* that *malignity* which endeavoured to *tear a wreath from the brow of Shakspeare*, would certainly not spare inferior writers." p. 481. Mr. Malone is no great logician—but let that pass. The passage to which he refers was probably written before Jonson knew Shakspeare; for it occurs in one of his earliest pieces. With respect to the *eminence* of Antony, it is somewhat scurvily treated by Decker, Chapman,

[6] See p. 5.

Digitized by Google

and Middleton; it is not therefore a necessary consequence that the wreath of Shakspeare was endangered by this ridicule.

"*Every Man in his Humour*, said to be acted in 1598, appears to be Jonson's first performance, and we may presume that it was the very play which we are told was brought on the stage by the good offices of Shakspeare. *Malignant* and *envious* as Jonson appears to be, he hardly would have *ridiculed* his benefactor at the very time he was so essentially obliged to him.[7] *Some* years afterwards his *jealousy* broke out; and vented itself in this prologue which first appeared in 1616. It is *certain* that not long after the year 1600, (again referring to the *Return from Parnassus!*) a coldness arose between Shakspeare and him, which, however he may talk of his almost idolatrous affection, produced, *on his part*," (what is become of Shakspeare's "ballad against Jonson"?) from that time, 1600,[8] "to the death of Shakspeare, and for many years afterwards, much *clumsy sarcasm*, and many *malevolent* reflections." p. 481.

The critic had already forgotten his unfortunate letter, p. xcv., in which he admits that "old Ben's jealousy did not fully display itself till Shakspeare retired from the stage." This goblin Prologue haunts Mr. Malone so incessantly, that it absolutely con-

[7] This is generous: for Mr. Malone had, in the very last quotation, accused Jonson of attempting *to tear the wreath* from Shakspeare's brow at the precise moment (1598) that he now affirms he would not do it! But, one word more: as Mr. Malone affirms this to be Jonson's *first* performance, and the very occasion of his becoming acquainted with Shakspeare, where, with his permission, is that *malignity* and *envy*, so *apparent*, (as he says) to be met with? In Jonson's school-exercises? or in his MS. scenes left at the Green Curtain? Of all calumniators Mr. Malone is the most headlong.

[8] Mr. Malone had just said that this jealousy broke out in the prologue, written, by his own account, thirteen years afterwards!

Digitized by Google

founds his faculties. He remembers neither what he would say, nor what he actually does say; but blunders on from one absurdity to another in a manner truly pitiable:—but the reader must be weary of this interminable folly.

Mr. Malone now gives us over again the old quotation from master Kempe; which, instead of proving Jonson's *jealousy*, bears hard upon the justice and humanity of Shakspeare:—and, as if determined to empty the whole quiver of his fury upon our great poet, he thus proceeds: "Shakspeare has, however, *marked* his disregard for the *calumniator* of his fame (in the *Poetaster*, where he is not even alluded to!) by not leaving him any memorial by his will." *ibid.*

Now mark the contrast. Shakspeare (it is always Mr. Malone who supplies the argument,) *ridicules* Jonson in 1600, without a shadow of provocation, maintains a *coldness* towards him for sixteen years, dies with *malice* in his heart, and, *to make it as public as possible*, leaves him no legacy!—Jonson, instead of manifesting any resentment at this contemptuous treatment, openly professes his affection for Shakspeare, and pours forth the most cordial and honourable testimony to his talents and virtues that ever dropt from the tongue of man!

Mr. Malone has rendered much the same sort of kind office to Shakspeare in his account of the transaction with "John-o-Combe," where the poet appears at once malevolent and ungrateful! Thank Heaven! the character of Shakspeare is too well established by Jonson to be shaken by the blows dealt around him in blind fury by Mr. Malone:—but this mode of *backing a friend*, though well meant, is not, after all, to be much commended.

——— "I am sorry for
Some better natures, by the rest drawn in
To run in that vile line.

Digitized by Google

By the words *better natures* there can, I think, be *little doubt*, that Shakspeare was meant." p. 541.

I hope, on the contrary, that there are *very great doubts*, or Shakspeare must again fall under the suspicion of unprovoked hostility to our author. What had Shakspeare to do with the wretched set of actors who burlesqued Jonson? What charm could he find in associating with "the lean Poluphagus," the "fat fool who begged scarves," or even with the furious Decker, to persecute a young writer, at the Rose, the Hope, the Green Curtain, and other theatres, with which he had no concern? If Jonson regretted that some honest men among them were "drawn in" by the misrepresentations of the rest, it is so far to the credit of his good nature. Shakspeare, I presume, may in future be relieved from the obloquy thus *thrust upon him* by the unlucky kindness of his friends.

"In the *Silent Woman*, 1609, Jonson perhaps pointed at Shakspeare as one whom he viewed with *scornful* yet *jealous* eyes: "So they may censure poets, and compare Jonson with *t'other youth*." A. v. sc. 7. Decker however may be meant! p. 541.

"Again, in the same play: You two shall be the chorus behind the arras, and whip out between the acts, and speak." *ibid.*

What is there of *scorn* and *jealousy* in this? The reader will find some remarks on these and the other passages adduced by Mr. Malone, in their respective places.—I cannot stop here to notice malice in its dotage; and this is nothing better.

"In the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) three of Shakspeare's plays, and in the piece itself two others are *ridiculed*." p. 542. Omitting the *three* for the present, the *two* ridiculed in the piece itself are *Julius Cæsar* in that important remark, "Come, there's no malice in these fat folks" (A. ii. S. 1), and *Lear*, in that equally interesting passage, "'Tis

Digitized by Google

but a blister, I'll take it away with the *white of an egg*, a little honey, and hog's grease."

About twelve years before this charge was made, Mr. Malone had written to Whalley—"I *agree with you entirely*, that *no ridicule* was intended against Shakspeare for the *white of an egg*." Very good.

"In the *Devil's an Ass, all* Shakspeare's *historical plays* are obliquely *censured*." p. 542.

"They are again attacked in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*." p. 542. I thought that we had done with *Bartholomew Fair*:—but the reader shall have the "attack on *all* Shakspeare's historical plays," as established by Mr. Malone.[9] "An some writer that I know had the penning of this matter, he would have made you such a jig-a-jog in the booth, you should have thought an earthquake had been in the Fair: but these master poets," (meaning Jonson himself, whom the bookholder had just been ridiculing for not introducing the usual feats of apes, jugglers, &c.) "will have their own courses, they will be informed of nothing." This is the passage—and now what does the reader think of the critic's assertion that *all the historical plays of Shakspeare are attacked in it!* What is more to the purpose, what does he think of his own simplicity in trusting to such a guide!

"The following passage in *Cynthia's Revels*, 1601, was, I think, likewise *pointed* against Shakspeare." p. 542.

This charge is so utterly frantic, that I must content myself with referring to the words on which it is founded, vol. ii.[1]

[9] The speaker is an ignorant stage-keeper at one of the puppet-show booths in Bartholomew Fair: and all that he says has reference to the farces and drolls exhibited there: beyond these he never looks; and the *writer* of whom he speaks was some popular composer of them.

[1] One word, however, may be subjoined. Jonson says, "They would wish *your poets*," &c.—Now Shakspeare, who is said by Mr.

Digitized by Google

"The Induction to the *Staple of News*, 1625, contains a *sneer* at *Julius Cæsar*."

"Other passages in Jonson might be mentioned in support of his *ridiculing* Shakspeare, but being quoted hereafter they are here omitted." p. 542. This is kind!—but why were all these produced? Nothing led to it but an overflowing of rancour, for the subject was the date of *Henry V.* with which none of them have anything to do.—"But," continues Mr. Malone, "notwithstanding these proofs," (so he calls this medley of absurdity and falsehood,) "Jonson's *malevolence* to Shakspeare has been doubted by Mr. Pope and others." Full of amazement at such want of faith, he proceeds to overwhelm their incredulity by the aid of another "proof;" and we have, once more, "the character of Jonson by his intimate friend Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden!" Assurance is thus made doubly sure, and Mr. Malone turns the page.

"Ben Jonson has in many places endeavoured to *ridicule* Shakspeare for representing battles on the stage." p. 561.

Again: "he *ridicules* him in his *Silent Woman*. 'I would sit out a play that was nothing but fights at sea, drum, trumpet, and *target*.' p. 562. Well! but the prologue to *Henry VIII.* mentions the *noise of targets*. How is this! Did Shakspeare *ridicule* himself? By no means, exclaim the commentators; for this prologue must have been written after Shakspeare's departure from the stage, by Ben Jonson."

Malone to be distinctly pointed at in this passage, happens to be the *only* writer whom we can positively affirm *not* to be pointed at. So far from being one of *the poets* of the Children of the Revels, he was in the most decided opposition to them, and in his *Hamlet*, written not long before this play appeared, had ridiculed them with equal wit and severity. Such is Mr. Malone's constant good luck!

Digitized by Google

This point being once agreed on, the abuse of our author follows as a matter of course.

"It may seem extraordinary," continues Mr. Malone, "that Jonson should *presume* to prefix this covert *censure* of Shakspeare to one of his own plays." —True, it may—"but he appears to have *eagerly embraced* every opportunity of *depreciating* him.—Had Shakspeare been concerned in the theatre in 1613 he would scarcely have suffered the lines to have been spoken, but he had retired from the stage some years before his death, careless to the fate of his writings, inattentive to the *illiberal* attacks of his contemporaries, and negligent alike of his present and posthumous fame."—The ink was not out of Mr. Malone's pen, the note was not finished, when he thus checks himself—"Since the above was written, I have seen a mortgage which was executed by Shakspeare in March 1613: from this Deed we find that Shakspeare was *still* in *London*"! Yet Mr. Malone has not the liberality to cancel his slander; but meanly attempts to bolster up what he had just given as a *fact*, by a *gratuitous supposition*—"Shakspeare *might*, however, have parted with his property!" p. 561.

Now observe:—"It has generally been believed" (it is still Mr. Malone who speaks,) that Shakspeare ceased to write for the stage about three years before his death; this *must now* be considered as extremely doubtful.—It is *improbable* that such an excursive genius should have been immediately reconciled to a state of mental inactivity. It is *more natural* to conceive that he should have occasionally turned his thoughts towards the theatre which his muse had supported, and the *interest* of his associates whom he had left behind—and whom his last Will shows us, he had not forgotten." p. 612.

Every syllable of this is in direct opposition to

Digitized by Google

what Mr. Malone had just advanced, that he might have an occasion to criminate Jonson.—But this is not all. The prologue to *Henry VIII.* it seems, was written by our author "to *ridicule* Shakspeare;" and the whole weight of the commentators' fury is directed against him, and him alone—"Jonson," says one of them, "in all probability maliciously stole this opportunity to throw in his *envious* and *spiteful invective* before the representation of his rival's play." *Henry VIII.* p. 348. But what influence had Jonson at the *Globe*, of which Shakspeare or his "associates" Heminge, Burbage, and Condell, were, at this time, the sole managers and proprietors? Who employed Jonson to write this prologue? Shakspeare's associates. Who spoke it? Shakspeare's associates. Who preserved it? Shakspeare's associates. Who, finally, gave it to the world? Shakspeare's associates!—the very men whom, as Mr. Malone has just observed, "the muse of Shakspeare had supported, and whom his last Will showed that he had not forgotten"! However great may be the obligations of Jonson to Shakspeare, (of which, I believe, the reader has here had a full account,) it will scarcely be denied that these men, who had so long profited by his wonderful talents, who were, at that very moment, profiting by them, were, at least, equally indebted to him.—Yet of their ingratitude not a word is said, not a hint is dropped, while the collected fury of Mr. Malone and his followers is levelled against a person who, at the worst, was only a simple agent, and wrought as they directed!

I have entered into these details merely to show what inconsistencies it is necessary for those to swallow who put their faith in Mr. Malone—for, after all, the whole of this tedious story is an absolute fable. The Prologue was not written by Jonson, and the play was not written by Shakspeare. The Piece acted in

Digitized by Google

1613 was "a NEW PLAY, called ALL IS TRUTH,"[2] constructed, indeed, on the history of Henry VIII. and, like that, full of shows; but giving probably a different view of some of the leading incidents of that monarch's life. Shakspeare's *Henry VIII.*, as Mr. Malone affirms, was written in 1601; if it had been merely revived, the Prologue would have adverted to the circumstance: but it speaks of the play as one which *had not yet appeared;* it calls the attention of the audience *to a novelty;* it supposes, in every line, that they *were unacquainted with its plan;* and it finally tells them that, if they came to hear a bawdy play, a noise of targets,[3] or to see a fellow in a fool's coat, they would be deceived. Could the audience expect anything of this kind? or was it necessary to guard them against it, in a favourite comedy, with which they had all been perfectly familiar for twelve years?

"It appears from the *Execration of Vulcan* that Ben Jonson was at the play-house (the *Globe*) when it was burnt; which in some measure strengthens the

[2] "But," says Mr. Malone, "*All is Truth* must be Shakspeare's *Henry VIII.* for the titles of many of his plays were changed in 1613; thus *Henry IV.* was called Hotspur, *Much ado about Nothing*, Benedict and Beatrice," &c. What is this to the purpose? If other titles were given to those plays in familiar conversation, they were still named after the principal characters or the leading events, and no mistake was likely to arise; but who would have recognized *Henry VIII.* under the name of *All is Truth?* Besides, it is expressly termed a *new play.* Could sir Henry Wotton, and those who notice it, be so ignorant of Shakspeare, as to call one of his most popular dramas a NEW play after it had been familiarized to the stage for so many years!

[3] On this Dr. Johnson observes—"This is *not* the only passage in which Shakspeare has discovered his conviction of the *impropriety* of battles represented on the stage," &c. Certainly not; nor of many other improprieties, for which the poverty of the old stage furnished some plea. But the Doctor's remark, and the poet's own apologies in *Henry V.* and elsewhere, are all conveniently forgotten, that Mr. Malone may have one opportunity more of calumniating Jonson!

Digitized by Google

conjecture that he was employed on the revival of *Henry VIII.* for this"—and let the words be noted —"for this was *not the theatre* at which his pieces were usually represented"! p. 563.

He had then little interest or influence there:—for the rest, it appears that Jonson could not stir out of doors to see a fire in his neighbourhood—but that he must needs be at the play-house when it was burnt, for the sake of writing a malicious prologue against Shakspeare!

But did he see it? He says, indeed, in his poem, "I *saw*," &c.—but this is a mere form of speech—a poetical license—briefly, for too much has been said on the subject already, I do not believe that Jonson was in England at this time. He was at Leyden in 1613, and we know from Drummond (whose authority is paramount with Mr. Malone,) that he was also at Paris in this year; he scarcely hastened home, on being told by Heminge, Burbage, and Condell that Shakspeare had stept across the way to sign a mortgage, to take possession of his theatre, and, in conjunction with his "associates," to write a prologue against him!

"I had observed in a note that Ben Jonson had *ridiculed* the *Winter's Tale* in 1614." p. 514.—Mr. Malone had first fixed the date of this play in 1594, then in 1604, afterwards in 1613, and, as far as I can understand him, (for his text and his notes confound each other,) ends with placing it in 1601 or 1602. Still, however, the main ground for all these dates respectively is its having been *sneered at* by Ben Jonson.

"*Antony and Cleopatra* is *ridiculed* in the *Silent Woman*, 1609." This clearly proves it to have been written in 1608! p. 599. "In the same play, I formerly thought Shakspeare was *sneered* at in the expression, 'You have lurched your friends of the

Digitized by Google

garland,' but I have since found the phrase elsewhere." p. 602. "Again; Mr. Steevens thinks *Othello* was *sneered* at in the *Alchemist*;"—but as the *Alchemist* was prior in date to *Othello*, Mr. Malone differs from his coadjutor; and very opportunely observes that "when old Ben meant to *sneer* at Shakspeare he generally *spoke out* and took care that his meaning should not be missed." P. 606.—as in the words chorus, arras, target, and a hundred others of the like decisive nature, on which Mr. Malone has established his charges of envy, &c.!

"Ben Jonson probably meant to *sneer* at the *Tempest* in the prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*—'nor *tempestuous* drum:' and he has endeavoured to *depreciate* this beautiful comedy by calling it a *foolery*." p. 611.

"It has been thought that Ben Jonson intended to *ridicule Twelfth Night* (which was written in 1614,) in his *Every Man out of his Humour*, (written in 1599,) I do not, however, believe this comedy was meant;"—such liberality is above all praise—"but," continues Mr. Malone, "if it were, it would ascertain *Twelfth Night* to have been written in 1598:" and he then proceeds to prove that it was the *last* of Shakspeare's plays! p. 613.

Thus every drama which is mentioned is made the vehicle of some new charge against Jonson; and with this medley of spleen and folly have the readers of Shakspeare been long entertained and enlightened.

We are now arrived at Macklin's forgery. In this, almost every crime in the black catalogue of sin is heaped upon Jonson. "He was splenetic, sour, over-run with envy,—the tyrant of the theatre—perpetually uttering slights and malignities against the lowly Shakspeare, whose fame was grown too great for his envy to bear," &c.—"the contempts and invectives which he uttered against Shakspeare

Digitized by Google

would *exceed* all *limits;* but they are produced in this pamphlet" (the one imagined by Macklin as the foundation of his forgery) "as unanswerable and shaming evidences to prove his ill nature and ingratitude to Shakspeare."—*Shak.* vol. ii. p. 503. I will not nauseate the reader with more of this vile trash, which is extended through several pages, rising one above the other in baseness. In this, however, Mr. Malone revels. He proves, indeed, (what was probably learned from Whalley,)[4] that the whole was an impudent falsehood; but he nevertheless maintains the justice of every abusive epithet applied to Jonson, and seems to think that Macklin has rather shewn too much tenderness for the poet's character.

Mr. Malone observes that "he always thought with indignation of the tastelessness of the scholars of that age in preferring Jonson to Shakspeare after the death of the latter, and he therefore did not feel much inclined to doubt the authenticity of a story so *conformable* to his own notions." p. 618. This is very well said—but I must beg leave to protest in this place, once for all, against the despicable trick of bringing our great poet forward in *forma pauperis*, and bespeaking commiseration for the wrongs which he is affirmed to have sustained from the neglect of his contemporaries. The commentators seem to run about like Jack, in the *Tale of a Tub*, with Shakspeare in their hand, and to solicit persecution for him—"Pray, gentlemen, lend Mr. Shakspeare a blow! Pray, good people, have the charity to bestow a kick upon Mr. Shakspeare"! The object of this is sufficiently obvious, and sufficiently wicked.—

[4] I observed (in volume v.) that Mr. Malone had made no acknowledgment of his obligation to Whalley. Perhaps, the following words, which I had not then noticed, may refer to it. "Some additional information on this subject, which I have lately obtained." *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 618. No name, however, is mentioned.

Digitized by Google

But Shakspeare was not "persecuted." No man had ever fewer enemies, alive or dead; and this is the more remarkable, as he was himself prone to parody, and must, therefore, have mortified many of his contemporaries, who had some reputation on the stage, until—*he drove them out of date.* It is not true that Jonson was preferred to him by the scholars of that age.[5] What was said after the death of both, neither of them is accountable for; but while they lived, Shakspeare had his proportion of fame: his plays were more frequently acted than Jonson's, and, if they were not, it was the fault of himself and his brother managers, for they were performed at his own house: in fact, the person who was envied, reviled, and persecuted, was our author.—But to Macklin.

When Mr. Malone had discovered that the libel on Jonson, such as we have seen it, "was an *innocent forgery;*" he very laudably strove to induce Macklin to own the fact, "assuring him" (as he says) "in the *strongest terms*, that no *kind of disgrace* could attend the confession; that his story was a *mere jeu d'esprit*, written for a harmless purpose," &c. Macklin, however, who seems to have formed a more correct view of the nature of moral turpitude than his father confessor, remained inflexible. He would *lie damnably*, as Shakspeare says, "to put off a few box-tickets;" but he could not be brought to believe that *forgery was harmless*, or a tissue of malicious falsehood, fabricated to blast the character of an innocent man, a *mere jeu d'esprit:* he chose rather therefore to persist in his story than encounter the general abhorrence which, with *one* exception, must have attended the acknowledgment of his crime.

[5] Yet Mr. Malone recurs to it again and again: just below he says "that Jonson was *extravagantly extolled* by the scholars of that age as *much superior* to Shakspeare." p. 628. And again and again, I pronounce it an unqualified falsehood.

Digitized by Google

"The *Comedy of Humours* played eleven times between 25 Nov. 1596 and 11th Maye, 1597."—"Perhaps," says Mr. Malone, (on this extract from Henslowe's memorandum-book,) "*Every Man in his Humour*. It will appear that Ben Jonson had money dealings with Mr. Henslowe, the manager of this theatre, (the Rose,) and that he wrote for him. The play might *afterwards* have been purchased *from this company* by the lord Chamberlain's servants, (Shakspeare, Burbage, Heminge, Condell, &c.) by whom it was acted in 1598." *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 457.

Would the reader believe, on any authority but the writer's own, that the Mr. Malone, who drew up this plain paragraph, could be the same Mr. Malone who, not merely in one, or two, but in a hundred places, has grossly reviled Jonson on the score of *ingratitude* to Shakspeare for *introducing* him to the stage, and bringing out this very play!

> "Yet must I not give nature all; thy *art*,
> My gentle Shakspeare, must enjoy a part." p. 560.

Though Steevens and Malone could not avoid giving Jonson's poem "on the memory of his beloved Shakspeare," they make no other use of it than to abuse the writer for his "envy, hatred, and jealousy of him." Though he allows the poet *art* here," says Mr. Malone, "yet he told Drummond he wanted *art*."[6] p. 500. But, with Mr. Malone's leave, the word is used in different senses. By *art* in the latter of these quotations, Jonson meant knowledge, information of a geographical or historical kind in

[6] Dryden is subsequently appealed to on this point:

> "Shakspeare, who taught by none, did first impart
> To Fletcher wit, to labouring Jonson *art*." p. 519.

As if Dryden cared what he said, or ever advanced a single tenet which he did not subsequently contradict! In his "Essay on Dramatic Poesy," he says, "Wit and language, and, in some measure, humour we had before Jonson, but *something of art was wanting to the Drama till he came*"! *Dry.* vol. xv. p. 355.

Digitized by Google

the construction of a plot—for, says he, "in one of his plays," (which Drummond had evidently never seen or heard of,) "he brings in a number of men saying they had suffered shipwreck in Bohemia." In the former passage *art* is opposed to nature.—But I am weary of justifying Jonson from a charge of "malice" founded on a heart-felt effusion which none but the most prejudiced can read without agreeing, as Farmer says, "that it is the warmest that ever was written, and carries Shakspeare's acquirements rather *above* than *below* the truth." *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 11.

"The beauties of the *Tempest* could not secure it from the *criticism* of Ben Jonson, whose *malignity* appears to have been more than equal to his wit." Steevens, *Shak.* vol. iii. p. 1.

"The *Tempest must* have been written before 1614, since Ben Jonson *sneers* at it in that year." p. 2.[7]

"Ben Jonson, who takes *every opportunity* to *find*

[7] Mr. G. Chalmers is so delighted with this "proof," that he condescends to lend all the strength of his reasoning faculties to enforce it. The *Tempest*, he says, in a little Essay just printed, must "have been written about the end of 1613, *because* we perceive, from these *great* authorities (those given above) that Ben Jonson attempted, in 1614, to *depreciate* it by scattering his *sarcasms* among the million; and it is *obviously certain*" (I beseech the reader to attend to this clencher) "that such *sarcasms* could only have been thrown out against a comedy *which had recently appeared;* his *sarcasms* would not have been understood by the multitude had they been made against a drama which had been *written some years before*," p. 42. Now observe: in this very page Mr. Chalmers charges Jonson, with equal vehemence, with uttering his sarcasms in the same line ("tales and tempests" are the words) against the *Winter's Tale*, which he, himself, labours to prove, and affirms that he has proved, to be written in 1601, thirteen years before the appearance of *Bartholomew Fair!*—He had already forgotten, (such is the fatality attendant on our author's calumniators,) though no more than six lines intervened, that it is *obviously certain* that such *sarcasms could* only be thrown out against a *comedy which had then recently appeared!*"

Digitized by Google

fault with Shakspeare, seems to *ridicule Twelfth Night* in *Every Man out of his Humour.*" Steevens, *Shak.* vol. iv. p. 2.

Mr. Malone had previously employed several pages (vol. i. pp. 611-15.) in proving *Twelfth Night* to be written in 1614, that is, sixteen years before the appearance of *Every Man out of his Humour;* he had also positively affirmed (p. cclxxv.) that he "*did not believe Twelfth Night* was meant;" yet he subjoins to the note of Steevens, (who knew that he had been delivering a falsehood,) "If the foregoing passage *was* levelled at *Twelfth Night*, my speculation falls to the ground." He has not the integrity to support his own facts, lest he should remove one absurd and wretched calumny from Jonson.—But the best is yet to come. Steevens, who attacks Jonson (p. 2) for ridiculing *Twelfth Night* in 1598, informs us (p. 129) that Shakspeare copied the behaviour of two of its characters from the *Silent Woman*, which was not in being till 1609! Can impudence go beyond this! What opinion must these vile calumniators have formed of the capacity of their readers! But they were right!—

"Ben Jonson appears to have *ridiculed* this scene (of the constables) in *Bart. Fair.*" Steevens, p. 480.

"Mr. Steevens *justly* observes that Ben Jonson intended to ridicule this scene in *Bart. Fair*, yet, in his *Tale of a Tub*, he makes his constables speak in the same style and blunder in the same manner without any such intention." *ib.* Malone. No doubt of it. And so did hundreds besides, both before and after Shakspeare's time:—but Mr. Malone need not have travelled forward to the *Tale of a Tub;* had he only turned back to *Cynthia's Revels*, he would have found constables *ridiculed* by Jonson twelve years, at least, before Twelfth Night was in being.

"The *Winter's Tale* is *sneered* at by B. Jonson in the *Induction to Bart. Fair.*" *Shak.* vol. vii. p. 2.

Digitized by Google

In his Conversation with Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden, he has another *stroke* at his *beloved* friend: he said that Shakspeare wanted art,[8] &c.—but we have already had this over and over.

"We are told by Dryden that Ben Jonson in reading some bombast speeches of *Macbeth* which were not to be understood, used to say, that it was horrour. Any person but this *envious detractor* would have dwelt with pleasure," &c. p. 387. This is very good. For these speeches which, as the critic observes, are *not to be understood*, our author had liberally apologized, "they were *horror*," one of the chief properties of which is to be dark and indistinct. Mr. Malone falls furiously upon Jonson, who had justified Shakspeare, while Dryden, who had actually condemned him, is thus gently dismissed. "That there are some *bombast speeches* in *Macbeth* which are *not to be understood*, as Dryden asserts, will not very readily be granted to him." Not a word of *envy* and *detraction:* these choice terms are reserved for the judicious and friendly apology of "old Ben."

"Clutch — this word though *reprobated* by Ben Jonson, who *sneers* at Decker for using it, was used by other writers (besides him and Shakspeare.") Malone, p. 406. Now Decker does *not* use the word; and Jonson does *not* reprobate the use of it by Shakspeare. I have shewn (vol. ii. *Poetaster*, A. v. S. 1.) that the whole line (not merely the word) "reprobated" by Jonson, is taken from Marston.

[8] How did Dryden escape the censure of Mr. Malone? "Let any man" (he says) "who understands English, read diligently the works of *Shakspeare*, and Fletcher, and I dare undertake that he will find *in every page* either some solecism, or some notorious flaw of *sense*." Or Philips? who, the commentators tell us, was assisted by Milton in his character of Shakspeare, and who yet says of him that "his unfiled expressions, his rambling and indigested fancies are the laughter of the critical." Jonson is the most tender of all Shakspeare's critics, and yet he is the only person who is taxed with malice towards him!

Digitized by Google

"These words, *hold hook and line*, are *ridiculed* by Ben Jonson in the *Case is Altered*, 1609." Steevens, *Shak.* vol. ix. p. 251. It so happens, and Steevens knew it well, that the *Case is Altered* was produced, at latest, in 1598, so that the *ridicule*, (if that be the term,) is Shakspeare's. Such stuff would be too contemptible for notice, were it not for the malicious motive of the commentator in bringing it forward.

"Why then lament therefore;"—this was perhaps intended to be *ridiculed* by Ben Jonson in the *Poetaster*." p. 253. It is a great pity that Mr. Malone forgot to tell us whom Shakspeare intended to *ridicule* by the expression.—Or was he ignorant that it was taken from Marlow, the great, but undeserving butt of Shakspeare's wit? With respect to Jonson, who admired Marlow, he merely puts it into the mouth of Tucca's boy, who is rehearsing before a player, to procure an engagement.

"Charming the narrow seas"[9] — Though Ben Jonson was *indebted to the kindness* of Shakspeare for the introduction of *his first piece* (*Every Man in his Humour*,) to the stage," (see p. ccxvi.) "yet in the prologue to that play, and in *many other* places, he has endeavoured to *ridicule* and *depreciate* him." Malone, p. 305.

"When the prologue was written is unknown, but the *envious author of it* did not publish it till the year of Shakspeare's death. Malone, *ibid.*

"Perhaps Ben Jonson was thinking of the *2d Part of Henry VI.* when he made Morose say, 'Nay, I would even sit out a play that *was nothing but fights* at sea." Steevens, vol. x. p. 121.

[9] "This passage shews that Shakspeare was fully sensible of the *absurdity* of shewing battles on the stage—which always turns tragedy into farce." Dr. Johnson, *Shak.* vol. ix. 266.

"Other authors of that age seem to have been sensible of the same *absurdities:* thus Heywood," &c. Steevens, *ibid.*

Digitized by Google

Just before, Steevens had accused Jonson of *sneering* at *Antony and Cleopatra* in this passage! There, as here, the whole of the "fights at sea," are confined to one solitary stage direction of three words.

The *malignant* Ben, in his *Devil's an Ass, sneers* at all Shakspeare's historical pieces." Malone, p. 451. All this scurrility, and much more, is heaped upon Jonson at the conclusion of a long Essay, tending to shew that these *historical pieces* were *not* Shakspeare's! The *First Part of Henry VI.* Mr. Malone says, was *not* written at all by Shakspeare, and of the remaining two parts, not quite a third. It cannot indeed be proved that a thirtieth of this "third" was written by him; for besides what are come down to us, scores of historical dramas, among which Shakspeare might forage for the supply of his house, are utterly lost. Yet an incessant attack is maintained against Jonson for his *malignity* to Shakspeare on this head; as if Shakspeare were the only person who ever wrote an historical play, or our author the only critic who ever noticed them!

Shak. vol. xi. p. 6. Mr. Malone here repeats the old ribaldry against Jonson for the prologue to *Henry VIII;* which brings up Steevens—"Were it *necessary*," he says, "to prove that old Ben was the author, we might observe that *happy* is used in it in the Roman sense of *propitious* or *favourable—sis bonus O felixque tuis*, a sense which *must have been unknown* to Shakspeare,[1] but was familiar to Jonson." Mr. Malone was properly grateful, I trust, for this most learned prop of his argument, which proves, besides, that no one but Jonson understood Latin, and that none but Jonson and Shakspeare could write a prologue!—But with deference to such profundity,

[1] That Shakspeare should not know that happy was propitious, the sense in which he and every English scholar perpetually use it, is an assertion worthy of Steevens.

Digitized by Google

it so chances that in all the places in which Jonson has used *happy* in the Roman sense, it does not even *once* occur in that of propitious, &c. Happy, in Jonson, (the translation of *beatus*,) is invariably *rich, fortunate*. The reputation of the commentators must "to the barber," I fear, with Polonius's beard.

P. 187. Mr. Malone here gives us again the silly story about the dozen laten spoons; (p. xxviii.) and observes upon it that—"it shews Shakspeare and Ben Jonson to be once on terms of friendship and familiarity, however *cold* and *jealous* the *latter*" (always the *latter*!) might have been at a subsequent period."

"Ben Jonson *unjustly sneers* at *Julius Cæsar* in his *Bart. Fair*. 'Come, there's no malice in these fat folks.'" *Shak.* vol. xii. p. 257.

"Ben Jonson *ridicules* this line, which he quotes unfaithfully," &c. *Steevens*, p. 314.

"It may be doubted whether Jonson quoted it unfaithfully:—but what are we to think of his *malignity*," &c. *ibid.*

Shak. vol. xiii. p. 248. Percy cites an expression of Jonson, to shew that the wretched *Titus Andronicus* was *not* written by Shakspeare; upon which Steevens bristles up and remarks, that "this ought to have no weight at all, as Jonson has not *very sparingly* censured the *Tempest* and others of Shakspeare's most finished pieces: indeed (adds he) the *whole* of Ben's prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*, is a *malicious sneer* upon him." Having thus vented his rancour, Steevens turns short round, and pronounces the play *not* to be Shakspeare's!

"The *contemptuous* manner in which Ben Jonson (in 1631) has mentioned *Pericles*," (he calls it a mouldy tale,[2]) "is, *in my opinion*, a proof that *it was*

[2] Mr. Malone forgets himself sadly—"When Ben Jonson (he says) calls *Pericles* a *mouldy tale*, he alludes, I apprehend, not to the *remote date* of the play; but to the *antiquity* of the story on

Digitized by Google

written by Shakspeare. In his Ode written *soon* after[8] his *New Inn* was damned, he *naturally* chose to point at what he esteemed a weak play of a rival whom he *envied* and *hated* merely because the splendour of his genius had eclipsed his own, and rendered the reception of those *tame* and *disgusting* imitations of antiquity which he boastingly called the *only legitimate* English dramas, as *cold* as the performances themselves"! p. 611.

Bravo! Mr. Malone. I might perhaps reply, that you have been insulting the times through all the former volumes for preferring Jonson to Shakspeare —but I am nearly weary of you.

"I'll fetch some *whites of eggs*"—this passage is *ridiculed* by Ben Jonson in the *Case is Altered*, 1609." Steevens. *Shak.* vol. xiv. p. 196. "The *Case is Altered* was written before the year 1599; but Ben Jonson might *have inserted this sneer at Shakspeare* between the time of *Lear's* appearance (in 1605) and the publication of his own play in 1609." *ibid.* Malone.

O that letter! This paragraph appeared in 1793, and in 1782, just eleven years before, Mr. Malone had thus written to Whalley, "I *entirely agree* with you, that *no ridicule was intended against Shakspeare* in the *Case is Altered* for "the white of an egg". What! not honest either?

In a subsequent passage (vol. xv. p. 557.) Steevens accuses Jonson of *ridiculing Othello* in *Every Man*

which it is founded," p. 633. Where then is the *contempt* on which, to the credit of his liberality, he has just raised so notable an argument!

[8] Soon after! "If (says Mr. Malone, *Shak.* vol. i. p. 629.) Mr. Macklin means that Jonson wrote his Ode *immediately after* his play was damned, the assertion is made at random." The distinction between *soon after* and *immediately after* is worthy of the critic. The fact is, that Mr. Malone did not foresee at this time that, as he was in pursuit of the same object as Macklin, he might have occasion hereafter for the same argument.

Digitized by Google

out of his Humour. On which Mr. Malone observes —"Ben Jonson was *ready enough, on all occasions*, to *depreciate* and *ridicule* Shakspeare; but, in the present instance, he must, I *believe*, be acquitted; for his comedy was written in 1599, at which time we are *almost* certain *Othello* had not appeared." *ibid.*

I *believe*—and we are *almost certain*—Very cautiously put—but Mr. Malone had again forgotten his letter, and what is more, himself. "I have," he says, (vol. i. p. 606.) "however, *persuaded myself* that *Othello* was one of Shakspeare's *latest* performances:" and he accordingly places it in 1611.

There are yet two volumes, charged with the same malevolence and folly—but I can go no further. If the reader should be as weary as myself, let him, in justice, call to mind that I have given him here but a small part of what is contained in one work only; and that he has been in the habit of listening without a murmur, without a symptom of dissatisfaction to the same cuckoo-strain in a hundred: for I am warranted in affirming that none of our old poets, especially our dramatic ones, have been republished within the last fifty years without teeming with the same vile ribaldry against Jonson. The editors follow one another, and boldly repeat the most absurd and improbable charges with a secure reliance on the credulity of their readers, and a happy confidence in the merit of their slanderous falsehoods. For the pages of the minor dramatists, I am little solicitous, but I cannot avoid thinking it more than time to disencumber those of our GREAT POET from the wretched obloquy with which they are everywhere surcharged, and to present him, at length, to the world, undefiled and undebased by a disgusting repetition of absurd, and rancorous abuse on the sincerest of his admirers, the warmest of his panegyrists, and the most constant and affectionate of his friends, BEN JONSON.

Digitized by Google

CHARACTERS OF BEN JONSON.

"HE" [Lord Clarendon, speaking of himself,] "owed all the little he knew, and the little good that was in him, to the friendships and conversation he had still been used to, of the most excellent men in their several kinds that lived in that age; by whose learning and information, and instruction, he formed his studies, and mended his understanding, and by whose gentleness and sweetness of behaviour, and justice, and virtue, and example, he formed his manners, subdued that pride, and suppressed that heat and passion, he was naturally inclined to be transported with. Whilst he was only a student of the law, and stood at gaze, and irresolute what course of life to take, his chief acquaintance were BEN JOHNSON, John Selden, Charles Cotton, John Vaughan, sir Kenelm Digby, Thomas May, and Thomas Carew, and some others of eminent faculties in their several ways. BEN JOHNSON'S name can never be forgotten, having by his very good learning, and the severity of his nature and manners, very much reformed the Stage; and indeed the English poetry itself; his natural advantages were, judgment to order and govern fancy, rather than excess of fancy, his productions being slow and upon deliberation, yet then abounding with great wit and fancy, and will live accordingly; and surely as he did exceedingly exalt the English language in eloquence, propriety, and masculine expressions; so

Digitized by Google

he was the best judge of, and fittest to prescribe rules to Poetry and Poets, of any man who had lived with, or before him, or since: if Mr. Cowley had not made a flight beyond all men, with that modesty yet, to ascribe much of this, to the example and learning of Ben. Johnson. HIS CONVERSATION WAS VERY GOOD, AND WITH THE MEN OF MOST NOTE; and he had for many years an extraordinary kindness for Mr. Hyde, till he found he betook himself to business, which he believed ought never to be preferred before his company: he lived to be very old, and till the palsy made a deep impression upon his body, and his mind." *Life of Edward Lord Clarendon*, vol. i. 23. *ed.* 1760.

"If we look upon JONSON while he was himself, (for his last plays were but his dotages,) I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the drama, till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such a height. Humour was his proper sphere, and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them: there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times, whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one

Digitized by Google

may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch, and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers, he so represents old Rome to us in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, it was, that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his comedies especially: perhaps too, he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them; wherein, though he learnedly followed their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. . . . . To conclude of him, as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *Discoveries*, we have as many and as profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any wherewith the French can furnish us." *Dryden. Essay on Dram. Poetry.*

"BENJAMIN JOHNSON, the most learned, judicious, and correct, generally so accounted, of our English comedians, and the more to be admired for being so, for that neither the height of natural parts, for he was no Shakspeare, nor the cost of extraordinary education; for he is reported but a bricklayer's son, but his own proper industry and addiction to books advanced him to this perfection: in three of his comedies, namely the *Fox*, *Alchemist*, and *Silent Woman*, he may be compared, in the judgment of learned men, for decorum, language, and well humouring of the parts, as well with the chief of the ancient Greek and Latin comedians, as the prime of modern Italians, who have been judged the best of Europe for a happy vein in comedies, nor is his *Bartholomew Fair* much short of them, as for his other comedies,

Digitized by Google

Cynthia's Revels, *Poetaster*, and the rest, let the name of Ben Johnson protect them against whoever shall think fit to be severe in censure against them: the truth is, his tragedies *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, seem to have in them more of an artificial and inflate than of a pathetical and naturally tragic height: in the rest of his poetry, for he is not wholly dramatic, as his *Underwoods*, *Epigrams*, &c. he is sometimes bold and strenuous, sometimes magisterial, sometimes lepid and full enough of conceit (wit), and sometimes a man as other men are." *Theatrum Poetarum, ed.* 1675, p. 19, 20.

"It will not perhaps be held altogether inadmissible, if before we close a volume which is consecrated to the name of Milton, a few thoughts are here thrown together on the tastes and partialities of our great poet, and the sort of author among his predecessors that he chiefly had in his eye, and whom he seems principally to resemble in his style of composition. . . . . The author to whom I allude is BEN JONSON. And a principal reason why I thus invite the public consideration to his writings, is that they do not seem at this moment to possess that degree of popular favour, to which in my judgment they are well entitled. It is somewhat singular, that at the time when Addison dared to talk of Spenser as a writer, who 'with ancient tales amused a barbarous age,' but who now 'can charm an understanding age no more', and when Pope enquired, 'Who now reads Cowley?' the laurels of Ben Jonson were unwithered; and that at the present day, when fifty illustrious authors are restored to our love, whom the folly of our immediate ancestors consigned to the tomb of the Capulets, Jonson alone seems to have fallen off in the general esteem. . . . . He is admitted to have had talents; but he is judged harsh, repulsive and unamiable.

Digitized by Google

He is too deeply intrenched in the fortifications of his learning. He is thought to have dealt perpetually in idioms imported from the classical writers, wholly alien to the genius of our language. The mind of man shrinks with conscious independence, from an author, who bids us censure him at our peril, and daringly assures us that the composition we are about to read is the abstract of all excellence, a work over which the corroding tooth of time shall have no power.[4] Jonson often seems to aspire to be the poet of good sense, rather than of fancy. On many occasions he has little sacrificed to the Graces. And in several of his longer poems, and 'Speeches according to Horace,' as he calls them, he is flat, heavy and tedious; and having in a small degree won upon our attention in the beginning brings us, after a lapse of thirty or forty lines, into a state of utter listlessness.

"Much of this is certainly true. But these are scattered features, and do not constitute the literary character of Jonson.

"It is not to the purpose of this Essay to treat of the merits of this eminent author as a comic writer, though these perhaps compose his strongest claim to the admiration of all posterity. He excells every writer that ever existed in the article of humour; and it is a sort of identical proposition to say, that humour is the soul of comedy. Even the caustic severity of his turn of mind aided him in this. He seized with the utmost precision the weaknesses of human character, and painted them with a truth that is altogether irresistible. Shakspeare has some characters of humour marvellously felicitous. But the difference between these two great supporters of the English drama, in the point of view we are consider-

[4] Yet we continue to read Horace, Ovid, and a number of other writers, who preceded Jonson in this boastful language.

Digitized by Google

ing, lies here. Humour is not Shakspeare's mansion, the palace wherein he dwells; there are many of his comedies, where the humorous characters rather form the episode of the piece; poetry, the manifestation of that lovely medium through which all creation appeared to his eye, and the quick sallies of repartee, are the objects with which his comic muse more usually delights herself. But Ben Jonson is all humour; and the fertility of his muse in characters of this sort is wholly inexhaustible.

"Yet, out of his very excellence, the ill-nature of imaginative criticism has drawn the ingredients with which to demolish the better part of his fame. Many have concluded, because he had a manly severity and steadiness of judgment, that he had a cold and unsusceptible spirit, that his writings are uniformly rugged and harsh, and that he was devoured with malice and envy towards his illustrious contemporaries. This is no bad specimen of the way in which mankind is apt, from a few scattered hints, to fill up a portrait. It must be confessed there is some keeping in the design; its fault is, that it has no pretensions to likeness. Whether Ben Jonson was a man of cold conceptions and feelings, or his writings on all occasions rugged and harsh, we shall presently have occasion to enquire. But that he was envious, and sparing in commendation to his contemporaries, may as well immediately be denied. His Commendatory Verses on Shakspeare, Drayton, Donne, Fletcher, Sir John Beaumont, and others, may easily be consulted; and he that finds in them any penury of praise, any malicious ambiguity, or concealed detraction, may safely be affirmed to have brought a mind already poisoned to their perusal. Let me produce an example from the fervent generosity with which he replies to the friendly epistle of Beaumont, the dramatist.

Digitized by Google

"How I doe loue thee, Beaumont, and thy Muse,
That vnto me dost such religion vse!
How I doe feare my selfe, that am not worth
The least indulgent thought thy pen drops forth!"[5]

"A great deal of the injustice which Ben Jonson has suffered under this head has proceeded from the misfortune of his visit to Drummond of Hawthornden, and therefore on that subject I beg to be allowed to say a few words. Jonson was already forty-seven years of age, and had finished all his great works, ... when he conceived the design, struck with some beautiful effusions of the Scottish poet, of journeying on foot from London to Hawthornden to pay him a visit. Heroical and generous was certainly the sentiment, that soothed his uneasy steps, and beguiled the weariness of the way. He was received no doubt with hospitality and the semblance of affection: and when he came home again, the first thing done by the illustrious votary of the English Muse, was at Drummond's request to send him a most beautiful Madrigal, 'On a Lover's Dust made Sand for an Hour-Glass,' with this Inscription:

"To the Honouring Respect
Born
To the Friendship contracted with
The Right Virtuous and Learned
Mr. William Drummond,
And the Perpetuating the Same by all offices of Love Hereafter,
I Benjamin Jonson,
Whom he hath honoured with the leave to be called His,
Have with mine own Hand, to satisfy his Request,
Written this Imperfect Song."

Drummond also did his part, and has, after his fashion, consecrated the memory of this extraordinary

[5] I quote these and the succeeding remarks with great pleasure: not only because they accord with what I had long since observed on the subject; but because they seem to prove that the career of malevolence and folly is drawing to a shameful close, and that the

Digitized by Google

visit, by putting down the 'Heads of Certain Conversations' between them, every word of which is a libel on the man, whom he made to believe that he was regarded by him with sentiments of the sincerest friendship. The question that remains is, how far a libeller and a treacherous ally is to be admitted for a competent witness; and the incompetence may as infallibly be produced by a diseased vision in the observer (such as led Drummond in this paper to affirm generally of his guest, that he was 'a great lover and praiser of himself, a contemner and scorner of others,') as by the most resolute spirit of deliberate falsehood. . . . . .

"In the catalogue of poets in the age of which we speak, the name of Ben Jonson will occupy no inglorious place: and Milton will certainly be found to have studied his compositions in this kind more assiduously, than those of any of his contemporaries. The following Verses to Celia, unfortunately founded on the faulty ethical system of sir Philip Sydney, are entitled to be inserted here on account of the use which Milton has made of them.[6]

"Come, my Celia, let us proue," &c.

The following Song of Hesperus, addressed to the Moon, in the fifth act of Cynthia's Revels, appears to me exquisitely simple and majestic:

"Qveene and huntresse, chaste and faire," &c.

. . . . . .

"Of the unsuccessful event of his love for Charis

character as well as the talents of Jonson are, at length, about to be judged with truth, and appreciated with candour.

I have not thought it necessary to quote the extracts given in this valuable Essay, nor any of the numerous passages in prose and verse which Milton is shewn to have borrowed from our author; suffice it to say, that Mr. Godwin has completely proved his point, and evinced at once his judgment, his taste, and his liberality.

[6] The Forest, No. 5.

Digitized by Google

he speaks, in a short copy of verses, accompanying the madrigal which has already been mentioned, sent by him to the unworthy Drummond. It begins:

"I doubte that love is rather deafe then blind,
For else it could not be, that she
Whom I adore so much, should so slight me,
And cast my love behind."

The disappointed lover proceeds with conscious worth:

"I'm sure my language to her was as sweet,
And every close did meet
In sentence of as subtile feet,
As hath the youngest hee,
That sits in shadow of Apollo's tree."

. . . . . .

"The following may serve as an example, whether the poet spoke with too presumptuous a confidence, when he asserted the smoothness of his language, and the melody of his versification:

"Charis one day in discourse
Had of Love, and of his force,
Lightly promis'd she would tell
What a man she could love well:
And that promise set on fire
All that heard her with desire.
With the rest I long expected
When the worke would be effected," &c.

. . . . . .

"The genius of this venerable author was particularly suited to that species of dramatical composition, at this time greatly in vogue, known by the appellation of Mask; and his poetical vein, together with the splendid taste and invention of Inigo Jones, who superintended the decorations to it, carried it to an extraordinary degree of perfection. I may refer for some of the most finished specimens to the Satyrs in Oberon, and the Witches in the Mask of Queens. It would be strange indeed, if the poet, who in early

Digitized by Google

youth composed the Mask of Comus, had not diligently studied the writings of Ben Jonson.

"One conspicuous feature in the productions of Jonson, of Fletcher, and many of the most eminent poets of this age, is the fervent strains in which they deliver themselves concerning purity, moral elevation, and virtue. Fletcher occasionally is wanton, and Jonson is coarse; this was the vice of their age. But they were men of sound and erect thinking; they were entirely strangers to that heart withering scepticism, which I have so often heard reverend gray-beards inforce in a later age; they believed that the good upon record were good, and the morally great were great; and when they had occasion to express the sentiments of virtuous enthusiasm, they did not fear the imputation of having incroached on the office of the pulpit. They knew that a well prepared mind, pouring forth from lips of fire conceptions worthy of an angelic nature, would never be mistaken for a proser or a hypocrite.—It would extend my Essay too far, to give examples of this; they will readily present themselves to every one who will look for them.

"One or two passages of a moral cast, but which, if possible, are still more eminent for the poetry that pervades them, I will venture upon. The following occurs in an Ode Pindaric, to the Memory of Sir H. Morison, who died in the flower of his youth:

"It is not growing, like a tree,
In bulke, doth make man better be:
Or standing long an oake, three hundred yeare,
To fall a logge at last, dry, bald and seare:
A lillie of a day
Is fairer farre in May,
Although it fall and die that night;—
It was the plant and flowre of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see:
And in short measures life may perfect bee." &c.

Digitized by Google

"The following is part of lord Lovel's discourse, when impleaded before his mistress, in the admirable comedy of the New Inn, Act the Third.

> "They are the earthly, lower form of lovers,
> Are only taken with what strikes the senses,
> And love by that loose scale," &c.

"It is not however in lighter and incidental matters only, that Milton studied the great model afforded him by Jonson: we may find in him much that would almost tempt us 'to hold opinion with Pythagoras,' and to believe that the very spirit and souls of some men became transfused into their poetical successors. The address of our earlier poet to the Two Universities, prefixed to his most consummate performance, the comedy of the Fox, will strike every reader familiar with the happiest passages of Milton's prose, with its wonderful resemblance.

. . . . . .

"The resemblance between Milton and our elder bard is in many respects conspicuous. They were both of them emphatically poets who had sounded the depths, and formed themselves in the school, of classic lore. . . . .

"The difference between the two poets may perhaps best be illustrated from the topic of religion. They had neither of them one spark of libertine and latitudinarian unbelief. But Jonson was not, like Milton, penetrated with his religion. It is to him a sort of servitude . . . . it is not the principle that actuates, but the check that controls him. But in Milton, it is the element in which he breathes, a part of his nature. He acts, 'as ever in his great task-master's eye:' And this is not his misfortune; but he rejoices in his condition, that he has so great, so wise, and so sublime a being, to whom to render his audit." *Appendix to the Lives of E. and J. Philips, p.* 387.

Digitized by Google

ANCIENT
COMMENDATORY VERSES[1]
ON BEN JONSON.

ON SEJANUS.

SO brings the wealth-contracting jeweller
Pearls and dear stones from richest stores and streams,
As thy accomplish'd travail doth confer
From skill enriched souls their wealthier gems;
So doth his hand enchase in ammel'd gold,
Cut, and adorn'd beyond their native merits,
His solid flames, as thine hath here inroll'd
In more than golden verse, those better'd spirits;
So he entreasures princes cabinets,
As thy wealth will their wished libraries;
So, on the throat of the rude sea, he sets
His vent'rous foot, for his illustrious prize;
And through wild desarts, arm'd with wilder beasts;
As thou adventur'st on the multitude,
Upon the boggy, and engulfed breasts
Of hirelings, sworn to find most right, most rude:

[1] It is merely necessary to observe that the greater number of these poems are taken from the earlier editions. Whalley seems not to have looked much beyond the folio, 1616, where he found the few which he prefixed to his edition of our author's works.

Digitized by Google

And he, in storms at sea, doth not endure,
Nor in vast deserts amongst wolves, more danger;
Than we, that would with virtue live secure,
Sustain for her in every vice's anger.
Nor is this Allegory unjustly rackt
To this strange length: only, that jewels are,
In estimation merely, so exact:
And thy work, in itself, is dear and rare;
Wherein Minerva had been vanquished,
Had she, by it, her sacred looms advanc'd,
And through thy subject woven her graphic thread,
Contending therein, to be more entranc'd;
For, though thy hand was scarce addrest to draw
The semicircle of SEJANUS' life,
Thy muse yet makes it the whole sphere, and law
To all state-lives; and bounds ambition's strife,
And as a little brook creeps from his spring,
With shallow tremblings, through the lowest vales,
As if he fear'd his stream abroad to bring,
Lest prophane feet should wrong it, and rude gales;
But finding happy channels, and supplies
Of other fords mixt with his modest course,
He grows a goodly river, and descries
The strength that mann'd him, since he left his source;
Then takes he in delightsome meads and groves,
And, with his two-edg'd waters, flourishes
Before great palaces, and all men's loves
Build by his shores, to greet his passages:
So thy chaste muse, by virtuous self-mistrust,
Which is a true mark of the truest merit;
In virgin fear of men's illiterate lust,
Shut her soft wings, and durst not shew her spirit;
Till, nobly cherisht, now thou let'st her fly,
Singing the sable Orgies of the Muses,
And in the highest pitch of Tragedy,
Mak'st her command, all things thy ground produces.

Digitized by Google

Besides, thy poem hath this due respect,
That it lets nothing pass, without observing
Worthy instruction; or that might correct
Rude manners, and renown the well deserving:
Performing such a lively evidence
In thy narrations, that thy hearers still
Thou turn'st to thy spectators; and the sense
That thy spectators have of good or ill,
Thou inject'st jointly to thy readers' souls.
So dear is held, so deckt thy numerous task,
As thou putt'st handles to the Thespian bowls,
Or stuck'st rich plumes in the Palladian cask.
All thy worth, yet, thyself must patronise,
By quaffing more of the Castalian head;
In expiscation of whose mysteries,
Our nets must still be clogg'd with heavy lead,
To make them sink, and catch: for cheerful gold
Was never found in the Pierian streams,
But wants, and scorns, and shames for silver sold.
What, what shall we elect in these extremes?
Now by the shafts of the great Cyrrhan poet,
That bear all light, that is, about the world;
I would have all dull poet-haters know it,
They shall be soul-bound, and in darkness hurl'd,
A thousand years (as Satan was, their sire)
Ere any, worthy the poetic name,
(Might I, that warm but at the Muses' fire,
Presume to guard it) should let deathless Fame
Light half a beam of all her hundred eyes,
At his dim taper, in their memories.
Fly, fly, you are too near; so, odorous flowers
Being held too near the sensor of our sense,
Render not pure, nor so sincere their powers,
As being held a little distance thence.
O could the world but feel how sweet a touch
The knowledge hath, which is in love with goodness,

Digitized by Google

(If Poesy were not ravished so much,
And her compos'd rage, held the simplest woodness,
Though of all heats, that temper human brains,
Hers ever was most subtle, high and holy,
First binding savage lives in civil chains;
Solely religious, and adored solely:
If men felt this, they would not think a love,
That gives itself, in her, did vanities give;
Who is (in earth, though low) in worth above,
Most able t'honour life, though least to live.
And so, good friend, safe passage to thy freight,
To thee a long peace, through a virtuous strife,
In which let's both contend to virtue's height,
Not making fame our object, but good life.

GEORGE CHAPMAN.[2]

TO HIS WORTHY FRIEND,

BEN JONSON, UPON HIS SEJANUS.

N that this book doth deign SEJANUS name,
Him unto more than Cæsar's love it brings:
For where he could not with ambition's wings,
One quill doth heave him to the height of fame.
Ye great ones though (whose ends may be the same)
Know, that, however we do flatter kings,
Their favours (like themselves) are fading things,
With no less envy had, than lost with shame.
Nor make yourselves less honest than you are,
To make our author wiser than he is:
Ne of such crimes accuse him, which I dare

[2] There is much more of this in the 4to. 1605, which is not worth recalling. The present copy is from the fol. 1616. Chapman has another complimentary poem on Sejanus, which is only found in the 4to.; where it may be left, without much injury to his fame.

Digitized by Google

By all his muses swear be none of his.
The men are not, some faults may be these times:
He acts those men, and they did act these crimes.

HUGH HOLLAND.[3]

ON SEJANUS.

WHEN I respect thy argument, I see
An image of those times: but when I view
The wit, the workmanship, so rich, so true,
The times themselves do seem retriev'd to me.
And as SEJANUS, in thy tragedy,
Falleth from Cæsar's grace; even so the crew
Of common play-wrights, whom opinion blew
Big with false greatness, are disgrac'd by thee.
Thus, in one tragedy, thou makest twain:
And, since fair works of justice fit the part
Of tragic writers, Muses do ordain
That all tragedians, ministers of their art,
Who shall hereafter follow on this tract,
In writing well, thy Tragedy shall act. CYGNUS.

ON SEJANUS.

SEJANUS, great, and eminent in Rome,
Raised above all the senate, both in grace
Of princes favour, authority, and place,
And popular dependance; yet, how soon,

[3] He was bred at Westminster school, under Camden, and thence elected fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge. He is said by Dr. Fuller to have been no bad English, but an excellent Latin poet. He wrote several things, amongst which is the life of Camden; but none of them, I believe, have been ever published. See an account of him in Athen. Oxon. 1 vol. col. 583. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

Even with the instant of his overthrow,
Is all this pride and greatness now forgot,
By them which did his state not treason know!
His very flatterers, that did adorn
Their necks with his rich medals, now in flame
Consume them, and would lose even his name,
Or else recite it with reproach, or scorn!
This was his Roman Fate. But now thy Muse
To us that neither knew his height, nor fall,
Hath raised him up with such memorial,
All future states and times his name shall use.
What, not his good, nor ill could once extend
To the next age, thy verse, industrious
And learned friend, hath made illustrious
To this. Nor shall his, or thy fame have end.

TH. R.[4]

AMICIS, AMICI NOSTRI DIGNISSIMI, B. J.

DIGNISSIMIS, EPIGRAMMA

D.

JOHANNES MARSTONIUS.

HE ready friends, spare your unneedful bays,
This work despairful envy must even praise:
Phœbus hath voiced it loud through echoing skies,
SEJANUS' fall shall force thy merit rise;
For never English shall, or hath before
Spoke fuller graced. He could say much, not more.

[4] As I cannot appropriate these and some of the following signatures with any degree of satisfaction to myself, I am unwilling to perplex the reader with conjectures on them, to no purpose.

Digitized by Google

ON SEJANUS.

HOW high a poor man shows in low estate
Whose base is firm, and whole frame competent,
That sees this cedar, made the shrub of fate,
Th'one's little, lasting; th' others confluence spent.
And as the lightning comes behind the thunder
From the torn cloud, yet first invades our sense,
So every violent fortune, that to wonder
Hoists men aloft, is a clear evidence
Of a vaunt-courring blow the fates have given
To his forc'd state: swift lightning blinds his eyes,
While thunder, from comparison-hating heaven,
Dischargeth on his height, and there it lies!
If men will shun swol'n fortune's ruinous blasts,
Let them use temperance: nothing violent lasts.

WILLIAM STRACHEY.[5]

ON SEJANUS.

THY poem (pardon me) is mere deceit,
Yet such deceit, as thou that dost beguile,
Are juster far than they who use no wile;
And they who are deceived by this feat,
More wise, than such who can eschew thy cheat:
For thou hast given each part so just a style,
That men suppose the action now on file;
(And men suppose, who are of best conceit.)
Yet some there be, that are not mov'd hereby,
And others are so quick, that they will spy

[5] There is a William Strachey, who published what he called *Laws Divine, Moral,* &c. *for Virginia,* 4to. 1612. But I know nothing more of him, nor whether he be the author of this rugged sonnet.

Digitized by Google

Where later times are in some speech unweav'd,
Those, wary simples; and these, simple elves:
They are so dull, they cannot be deceiv'd,
These so unjust, they will deceive themselves.

ΦΙΛΟΣ.

ON SEJANUS.

WHEN in the Globe's fair ring, our world's best stage,
I saw SEJANUS, set with that rich foil,
I look'd the author should have born the spoil
Of conquest, from the writers of the age:
But when I view'd the people's beastly rage,
Bent to confound thy grave, and learned toil,
That cost thee so much sweat, and so much oil,
My indignation I could hardly assuage.
And many there (in passion) scarce could tell
Whether thy fault, or theirs deserv'd most blame;
Thine, for so shewing, theirs, to wrong the same:
But both they left within that doubtful hell,
From whence, this publication sets thee free:
They, for their ignorance, still damned be. Ev. B.

AMICISSIMO, ET MERITISSIMO

BEN. JONSON, IN VULPONEM.

QUOD arte ausus es hic tuâ, Poeta,
Si auderent hominum deique juris
Consulti, veteres sequi æmulariérque,
O omnes saperemus ad salutem.
His sed sunt veteres araneosi;
Tam nemo veterum est sequutor, ut tu

Digitized by Google

Illos quòd sequeris novator audis.
Fac tamen quod agis; tuique primâ
Libri canitie induantur horâ:
Nam chartis pueritia est neganda,
Nascuntúrque senes, oportet, illi
Libri, queis dare vis perennitatem.
Priscis, ingenium facit, labórque
Te parem; hos superes, ut et futuros,
Ex nostrâ vitiositate sumas,
Quâ priscos superamus, et futuros.

J. DONNE.

AD UTRAMQUE ACADEMIAM,

DE BENJAMIN JONSONIO,

IN VOLPONEM.

HIC ille est primus, qui doctum drama Britannis,
Graiorum antiqua, et Latii monimenta theatri,
Tanquam explorator versans, fœlicibus ausis
Præbebit: magnis cœptis, gemina astra, favete.
Alterutrâ veteres contenti laude: Cothurnum hic,
Atque pari soccum tractat Sol scenicus arte;
Das Volpone jocos, fletus Sejane dedisti.
At si Jonsonias mulctatas limite musas
Angusto plangent quiquam: Vos, dicite, contrà,
O nimiùm miseros quibus Anglis Anglica lingua,
Aut non sat nota est; aut queis (seu trans mare natis)
Haud nota omnino! Vegetet cum tempore vates,
Mutabit patriam, fiêtque ipse Anglus Apollo.

E. BOLTON.

Digitized by Google

TO MY DEAR FRIEND

MASTER BEN JONSON, UPON HIS FOX

IF it might stand with justice, to allow
The swift conversion of all follies; now,
Such is my mercy, that I could admit
All sorts should equally approve the wit
Of this thy even work: whose growing fame
Shall raise thee high, and thou it, with thy name.
And did not manners, and my love command
Me to forbear to make those understand,
Whom thou, perhaps, hast in thy wiser doom
Long since, firmly resolv'd, shall never come
To know more than they do; I would have shewn
To all the world, the art, which thou alone
Hast taught our tongue, the rules of time, of place,
And other rites, delivered with the grace
Of comic style, which only, is far more
Than any English stage hath known before.
But since our subtle gallants think it good
To like of nought that may be understood,
Lest they should be disprov'd; or have, at best,
Stomachs so raw, that nothing can digest
But what's obscene, or barks: let us desire
They may continue, simply, to admire
Fine cloaths, and strange words; and may live, in age,
To see themselves ill brought upon the stage,
And like it. Whilst thy bold, and knowing Muse
Contemns all praise, but such as thou wouldst choose.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

Digitized by Google

ON VOLPONE.

IF thou dar'st bite this Fox, then read my rhymes;
Thou guilty art of some of these foul crimes:
Which else, are neither his, nor thine, but Time's.

If thou dost like it, well; it will imply
Thou lik'st with judgment, or best company:
And he, that doth not so, doth yet envy

The ancient forms reduced, as in this age
The vices, are; and bare-faced on the stage:
So boys were taught to abhor seen drunkards rage.

T. R.

TO MY GOOD FRIEND

MASTER JONSON.

THE strange new follies of this idle age,
In strange new forms, presented on the stage
By thy quick muse, so pleas'd judicious eyes;
That th' once admired ancient comedies'
Fashions, like clothes grown out of fashion, lay
Lock'd up from use: until thy Fox' birth-day,
In an old garb, shew'd so much art, and wit,
As they the laurel gave to thee, and it.

D. D.

ON VOLPONE.

THE Fox, that eas'd thee of thy modest fears,
And earth'd himself, alive, into our ears,
Will so, in death, commend his worth, and thee
As neither can, by praises, mended be:
'Tis friendly folly, thou may'st thank, and blame,
To praise a book, whose forehead bears thy name.

Digitized by Google

Then JONSON, only this (among the rest,)
I, ever, have observ'd, thy last work's best:
Pace, gently on; thy worth, yet higher, raise;
Till thou write best, as well as the best plays.

J. C.

ON VOLPONE.

COME, yet, more forth, Volpone, and thy chase
Perform to all length, for thy breath will serve thee;
The usurer shall, never, wear thy case:
Men do not hunt to kill, but to preserve thee.
Before the best hounds, thou dost, still, but play;
And, for our whelps, alas, they yelp in vain:
Thou hast no earth; thou hunt'st the milk-white way;
And, through th' Elysian fields, dost make thy train.
And as the symbol of life's guard, the hare,
That, sleeping, wakes; and, for her fear, was saf't:
So, thou shalt be advanc'd, and made a star,
Pole to all wits, believ'd in, for thy craft.
In which the scenes both mark, and mystery
Is hit, and sounded, to please best, and worst;
To all which, since thou mak'st so sweet a cry,
Take all thy best fare, and be nothing curst.

G. C.[6]

ON VOLPONE.

VOLPONE now is dead indeed, and lies
Exposed to the censure of all eyes,
And mouths; now he hath run his train, and shewn
His subtle body, where he best was known;

[6] These lines may be set down, without scruple, to Chapman's account.

Digitized by Google

In both Minerva's cities: he doth yield,
His well-form'd limbs upon this open field.
Who, if they now appear so fair in sight,
How did they, when they were endow'd with spright
Of action? In thy praise let this be read,
The Fox will live, when all his hounds be dead.

E. S.

TO

BEN JONSON, ON VOLPONE.

FORGIVE thy friends; they would, but cannot praise
Enough the wit, art, language of thy plays:
Forgive thy foes; they will not praise thee. Why?
Thy fate hath thought it best they should envy.
Faith, for thy Fox's sake, forgive then those
Who are nor worthy to be friends, nor foes.
Or, for their own brave sake, let them be still
Fools at thy mercy, and like what they will.

J. F.[7]

ON THE SILENT WOMAN.

HEAR you bad writers, and though you not see,
I will inform you where you happy be:
Provide the most malicious thoughts you can,
And bend them all against some private man,
To bring him, not his vices, on the stage;
Your envy shall be clad in some poor rage,
And your expressing of him shall be such,
That he himself shall think he hath no touch.

[7] These lines are entirely in Fletcher's manner, to whom, I believe, we may safely ascribe them. Those preceding are probably by Edward Scory.

Digitized by Google

Where he that strongly writes, although he mean
To scourge but vices in a labour'd scene,
Yet private faults shall be so well exprest,
As men do act 'em, that each private breast,
That finds these errors in itself, shall say,
He meant me, not my vices, in the play.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

TO MY FRIEND

BEN JONSON, UPON HIS ALCHEMIST.

A MASTER, read in flattery's great skill,
Could not pass truth, though he would force his will,
By praising this too much, to get more praise
In his art, than you out of yours do raise.
Nor can full truth be utter'd of your worth,
Unless you your own praises do set forth:
None else can write so skilfully, to shew
Your praise: Ages shall pay, yet still must owe.
All I dare say, is, you have written well;
In what exceeding height, I dare not tell.

GEORGE LUCY.

ON THE ALCHEMIST.

THE Alchemist, a play for strength of wit,
And true art, made to shame what hath been writ
In former ages; I except no worth
Of what or Greeks or Latins have brought forth;
Is now to be presented to your ear,
For which I wish each man were a Muse here
To know, and in his soul be fit to be
Judge of this master-piece of comedy;

Digitized by Google

That when we hear but once of JONSON's name,
Whose mention shall make proud the breath of fame
We may agree, and crowns of laurel bring,
A justice unto him the poet's king.
But he is dead: time, envious of that bliss
Which we possest in that great brain of his,
By putting out this light, hath dark'ned all
The sphere of Poesy, and we let fall
At best unworthy elegies on his hearse,
A tribute that we owe his living verse;
Which, though some men that never reach'd him may
Decry, that love all folly in a play,
THE WISER FEW SHALL THIS DISTINCTION HAVE,
TO KNEEL, NOT TREAD, UPON HIS HONOUR'D GRAVE.

JAMES SHIRLEY.

JONSON, t' whose name wise art did bow, and wit
Is only justified by honouring it:
To hear whose touch, how would the learned quire
With silence stoop? and when he took his lyre,
Apollo stopt his lute, asham'd to see
A rival to the god of harmony, &c.

SHIRLEY'S *Poems, p.* 159.[8]

TO MY FRIEND

BEN JONSON, UPON HIS CATILINE.

IF thou hadst itch'd after the wild applause
Of common people, and hadst made thy laws
In writing, such, as catch'd at present voice,
I should commend the thing, but not thy choice.

[8] This is the person singled out by Steevens and others, with such exquisite propriety, as the most scurrilous of Jonson's enemies. *Shak.* vol. ii. p. 505.

Digitized by Google

But thou hast squar'd thy rules by what is good,
And art three ages, yet, from understood:
And (I dare say) in it there lies much wit
Lost, till the readers can grow up to it.
Which they can ne'er out-grow, to find it ill,
But must fall back again, or like it still.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

TO MY WORTHY FRIEND

BEN JONSON, ON HIS CATILINE.

HE, that dares wrong this play, it should appear
Dares utter more than other men dare hear,
That have their wits about them; yet such men,
Dear friend, must see your book, and read; and then
Out of their learned ignorance, cry ill,
And lay you by, calling for mad Pasquil,
Or Green's dear Goatsworth, or Tom Coryate,
Or the new Lexicon, with the errant pate:
And pick away, from all these several ends,
And dirty ones, to make their as-wise friends
Believe they are translators. Of this, pity!
There is a great plague hanging o'er the city;
Unless she purge her judgment presently.
But, O thou happy man, that must not die,
As these things shall; leaving no more behind
But a thin memory, like a passing wind
That blows, and is forgotten, ere they are cold.
Thy labours shall outlive thee; and, like gold
Stampt for continuance, shall be current, where
There is a sun, a people, or a year.

JOHN FLETCHER.

Digitized by Google

TO HIS WORTHY AND BELOVED FRIEND MASTER

BEN JONSON, ON HIS CATILINE.

HAD the great thoughts of Catiline been good,
The memory of his name, stream of his blood,
His plots past into acts, (which would have turn'd
His infamy to fame, though Rome had burn'd)
Had not begot him equal grace with men,
As this, that he is writ by such a pen:
Whose inspirations, if great Rome had had,
Her good things had been better'd, and her bad
Undone; the first for joy, the last for fear,
That such a Muse should spread them, to our ear.
But woe to us then! for thy laureat brow
If Rome enjoy'd had, we had wanted now.
But, in this age, where jigs and dances move,
How few there are, that this pure work approve.
Yet, better than I rail at, thou canst scorn
Censures that die, ere they be thoroughly born.
Each subject, thou, still thee each subject raises,
And whosoe'er thy book, himself dispraises.

NAT. FIELD.

AD V. CL.

BEN. JONSONIUM,

CARMEN PROTREPTICON.

RAPTAM Threicii lyram Neanthus
Pulset; carmina circulis Palæmon
Scribat; qui manibus facit deabus
Illotis, metuat Probum. Placere
Te doctis juvat auribus, placere

Digitized by Google

Te raris juvat auribus. Camænas
Cùm totus legerem tuas (Camænæ
Nam totum rogitant tuæ, nec ullam
Qui pigrè trahat oscitationem,
Lectorem) et numeros, acumen, artem,
Mirum judicium, quod ipse censor,
JONSONI, nimium licèt malignus,
Si doctus simùl, exigat, viderem,
Sermonem et nitidum, facetiásque
Dignas Mercurio, novásque gnomas
Morum sed veterum, tuique juris
Quicquid dramaticum tui legebam,
Tam semper fore, támque te loquutum,
Ut nec Lemnia notior sigillo
Tellus, nec maculâ sacrandus Apis,
Non cesto Venus, aut comis Apollo,
Quàm musâ fueris sciente notus,
Quàm musâ fueris tuâ notatus,
Illâ, quæ unica, sidus ut refulgens,
Stricturas, superat comis, minorum:
In mentem subiit Stolonis illud,
Lingua Pieridas fuisse Plauti
Usuras, Ciceronis atque dictum,
Saturno genitum phrasi Platonis,
Musæ si Latio, Jovisque Athenis
Dixissent. Fore jam sed hunc et illas
Ionsonî numeros puto loquutos,
Anglis si fuerint utrique fati.
Tam, mi, tu sophiam doces amænè
Sparsìm tamque sophos amæna sternis!
Sed, tot delicias, minùs placebat,
Sparsis distraherent tot in libellis
Cerdoi caculæ. Volumen unum,
Quod seri Britonum terant nepotes,
Optabam, et thyasus chorúsque amantum
Musas hoc cupiunt, tui laborum
Et quicquid reliquum est, adhuc tuisque

Digitized by Google

Servatum pluteis. Tibi at videmur
Non tàm quærere quàm parare nobis
Laudem, dum volumus palàm merentis
Tot laurus cupidi reposta scripta;
Dum secernere te tuasque musas
Audemus numero ungulæ liquorem
Gustante, et veteres novem sorores
Et Sirenibus et solent cicadis:
Dum et secernere posse te videmur,
Efflictim petimus novúmque librum,
Qui nullo sacer haut petatur ævo,
Qui nullo sacer exolescat ævo,
Qui curis niteat tuis secundis;
Ut nos scire aliquid simul putetur.
Atqui hoc macte sies, velutque calpar,
Quod diis inferium, tibi sacremus,
Ut nobis benè sit; tuámque frontem
Perfundant ederæ recentiores
Et splendor novus. Invident coronam
Hanc tantam patriæ tibique (quantâ
Æternùm à merito tuo superbum
Anglorum genus esse possit olim)
Tantùm qui penitùs volunt amænas
Sublatas literas, timéntve lucem
Ionsoni nimiam tenebriones.

J. SELDEN.

TO

BEN JONSON, ON HIS WORKS.

MAY I subscribe a name? dares my bold quill
Write that or good or ill,
Whose frame is of that height, that, to mine eye,
Its head is in the sky?

Digitized by Google

Yes. Since the most censures, believes, and saith
By an implicit faith:
Lest their misfortune make them chance amiss,
I'll waft them right by this.
Of all I know thou only art the man
That dares but what he can:
Yet by performance shows he can do more
Than hath been done before,
Or will be after; (such assurance gives
Perfection where it lives.)
Words speak thy matter; matter fills thy words:
And choice that grace affords,
That both are best: and both most fitly placed,
Are with new Venus graced
From artful method. All in this point meet,
With good to mingle sweet.
These are thy lower parts. What stands above
Who sees not yet must love,
When on the base he reads Ben Jonson's name,
And hears the rest from fame.
This from my love of truth: which pays this due
To your just worth, not you.

ED. HEYWARD.[9]

ON THE AUTHOR OF THIS VOLUME

THE POET LAUREAT, BEN JONSON.

HERE is a poet! whose unmuddled strains
Shew that he held all Helicon in's brains.
What here is writ, is sterling; every line
Was well allow'd of by the Muses nine.

[9] This gentleman was by profession a lawyer, and an intimate friend of our author, and of the great Selden. The regard, which the latter had for him, appears from his addressing to him his book on *the Titles of Honour*. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

When for the stage a drama he did lay,
Tragic or comic, he still bore away
The sock and buskin; clearer notes than his
No swan e'er sung upon our Thamesis;
For lyric sweetness in an ode, or sonnet,
To BEN the best of wits might vail their bonnet.
His genius justly, in an entheat rage,
Oft lash'd the dull-sworn factors for the stage:
For Alchymy, though't make a glorious gloss,
Compar'd with Gold is bullion and base dross.

WILL. HODGSON.

ON HIS ELABORATED PLAYS.

EPIGRAM.

EACH like an Indian ship or hull appears,
That took a voyage for some certain years,
To plough the sea, and furrow up the main,
And brought rich ingots from his loaden brain.
His art the sun; his labours were the lines;
His solid stuff the treasure of his mines.

WILL. HODGSON.

IN BENJAMINUM JONSONUM,

POETAM LAUREATUM, ET DRAMATICORUM SUI SECULI FACILÈ PRINCIPEM.

JONSONE, Angliacæ decus immortale Camœnæ,
Magne pater vatum, Aoniæ Coryphæe catervæ,
Benjamine, (tibi nec vanum nominis omen)
Cui tam dextera Pallas adest, tam dexter Apollo;

Digitized by Google

Laurigeros egit quoties tua Musa triumphos!
Laudibus en quantis, quanto evehit Anglia plausu
Jonsonum, pleni moderantem fræna theatri!
Per te scena loqui didicit: tibi candida vena,
Et jocus innocuus; nec quem tua fabula mordet
Dente Theonino, sed pravis aspera tantum
Moribus, insanum multo sale defricat ævum.
Nec fescennino ludit tua carmine Musa;
Nec petulans aures amat incestare theatri,
Aut fœdare oculos obscœnis improba nugis:
Sunt tibi tam castæ veneres, plenæque pudoris.
Scenam nulla tuam perfrictâ fronte puella
Intrat, nec quenquam teneræ capit illice vocis,
Nec spectatorem patranti frangit ocello.
Dramate tu recto, tu linguæ idiomate puro,
Exornas soccósque leves, grandésque cothurnos.
Si Lyricus, tu jam Flaccus; si comicus, alter
Plautus es ingenio, tersivè Terentius oris
Anglicus, aut, Græcos si fortè imitere, Menander,
Cujus versu usus, ceu sacro emblemate, Paulus:
Sin Tragicus, magni jam præceptore Neronis
Altiùs eloqueris, Senecâ et prædivite major,
(Ingenii at tantùm dives tu divite venâ)
Grandiùs ore tonas, verborum et fulmina vibras.
Tu captatores, locupleti hamata, senique,
Munera mittentes, Vulpino decipis astu
Callidus incautos, et fraudem fraude retexis:
Atque hæredipetas corvos deludis hiantes,
Vanâ spe lactans, cera nec scribis in ima.
Per te nec leno aut meretrix impunè per urbem
Grassatur, stolidæ et tendit sua retia pubi.
Nec mœchus, nec fur, incastigatus oberrat,
Illæsúsve, tuæ prudenti verbere scenæ.
Sic vitium omne vafer tuus ipse ut *Horatius* olim,
Tangis, et admissus circum præcordia ludis.
Per te audax Catilina, nefas horrendus Alastor
Dum struit infandum, cædésque et funera passim

Digitized by Google

Molitur Romæ, facundi consulis ore
Ingenióque perit; patriæ et dum perfidus enses
Intentat jugulo, franguntur colla Cethegi;
Quicquid Sylla minax, ipsis è faucibus orci,
Et fortunati demurmuret umbra tyranni:
Nempe faces flammásque extinguit flumine lactis
Tullius, Angliaco meliùs sic ore locutus.
Culmine tu rapiens magnum devolvis ab alto
Sejanum; ille potens populum, pavidúmque senatum
Rexerat imperio nuper, dum solus habenas
Tractaret Romæ, nutu et tremefecerat orbem,
Cæsare confisus; nunc verso cardine rerum
Mole suâ miser ipse cadens, et pondere pressus,
Concutit attonitum lapsu graviore theatrum,
Ingentémque trahit turbâ plaudente ruinam.
Sic nullum exemplo crimen tu linquis inultum,
Sive et avarities, et amor vesanus habendi,
Sive sit ambitio, et dominandi cæca libido.
Crimina sic hominum versu tortore flagellas,
Et vitia exponis toti ludibria plebi;
Protinus illa tuo sordent explosa theatro,
Dramáque virtutis schola fit, prælectio scena,
Histrio philosophus, morum vel denique censor,
Et ludi, Jonsone, tui sic seria ducunt.
Ergo tua effigies, nostris spectanda plateis,
(Quam meliùs toti ostendit tua Pagina mundo)
Non hominis, sed viva Poesios extat imago;
Benjamini icon, capitísque insigne poetæ;
Nomen et ingenii, Jonsoni nomen habetur.[1]

[1] *Musæ Subsecivæ* J. Duporti, *Cantabrigiæ*, 8vo. 1676, p. 8.

Digitized by Google

Sir Edward Herbert,

Upon his Friend Mr. Ben Jonson, and his Translation.

'TWAS not enough, Ben Jonson, to be thought
Of English poets best, but to have brought
In greater state, to their acquaintance, one
Made equal to himself and thee; that none
Might be thy second: while thy glory is
To be the Horace of our times, and his.[2]

TO BEN JONSON.

'TIS dangerous to praise; besides the task,
Which to do't well, will ask
An age of time and judgment; who can then
Be prais'd, and by what pen?
Yet, I know both, whilst thee I safely chuse
My subject, and my Muse.
For sure, henceforth our poets shall implore
Thy aid, which lends them more,
Than can their tired Apollo, or the Nine
She wits, or mighty wine.
The deities are bankrupts, and must be
Glad to beg art of thee.
Some they might once perchance on thee bestow:
But, now, to thee they owe:
Who dost in daily bounty more wit spend,
Than they could ever lend.
Thus thou didst build the Globe, which, but for thee,
Should want its axle-tree:
And, like a careful founder, thou dost now
Leave rules for ever, how

[2] From the minor edition of Jonson's Poems, 1640.

Digitized by Google

To keep't in reparations, which will do
More good, than to build two.
It was an able stock thou gav'st before;
Yet, lo, a richer store!
Which doth, by a prevention, make us quit
With a dear year of wit:
Come when it will, by this thy name shall last
Until Fames' utmost blast, &c.

BARTON HOLYDAY.[3]

TO MASTER JONSON.

BEN,

THE world is much in debt, and though it may
Some petty reck'nings to small poets pay:
Pardon if at thy glorious sum they stick,
Being too large for their arithmetic.
If they could prize the genius of a scene,
The learned sweat that makes a language clean,
Or understand the faith of ancient skill,
Drawn from the tragic, comic, lyric quill;
The Greek and Roman denizen'd by thee,
And both made richer in thy poetry;
This they may know, and knowing this still grudge,
That yet they are not fit of thee to judge.
I prophesy more strength to after time,
Whose joy shall call this isle the poets' clime,
Because 'twas thine, and unto thee return
The borrow'd flames, with which thy Muse shall burn,
Then when the stock of others' fame is spent,
Thy poetry shall keep its own old rent.

ZOUCH TOWNLEY.[4]

[3] From the minor edition of Jonson's Poems, 1640. There is much more of it; but as Barton began to grow outrageously witty, it seemed best to stop short.

[4] From the same.

Digitized by Google

AD BENJAMINUM JONSONUM.

IN jus te voco, JONSONI venito :
Adsum, qui plagii et malæ rapinæ
Te ad Phœbi peragam reum tribunal,
Assidente choro novem dearum.
Quædam dramata scilicet diserta,
Nuper quæ Elysii roseti in umbrâ,
Fæstivissimus omnium poeta,
Plautus composuit, diisque tandem
Stellato exhibuit poli in theatro,
Movendo superis leves cachinnos,
Et risos tetrico Jovi ciendo,
Axe plausibus intonante utroque ;
Hæc tu dramata scilicet diserta,
Clepsisti superis negotiosis,
Quæ tu nunc tua venditare pergis :
In jus te voco, Jonsoni venito.
En pro te pater ipse, Rexque Phœbus
Assurgit modò, Jonsoni, palamque
Testatur, tua serio fuisse
Illa dramata, teque condidisse
Sese non modô conscio, at juvante :
Unde ergò sibi Plautus illa tandem
Nactus exhibuit, Jovi Deisque ?
Maiæ Filius, et Nepos Atlantis,
Pennatus celeres pedes, at ungues
Viscatus, volucer puer, vaferque,
Furto condere quidlibet jocoso,
Ut quondam facibus suis Amorem
Per ludos viduavit, et pharetrâ,
Sic nuper (siquidem solet frequenter
Tecum ludere, plaudere, et jocari)

Digitized by Google

Neglectas tibi clepsit has papyrus
Secumque ad superos abire jussit :
Jam victus taceo pudore, vincis
Phœbo Judice, JONSONI, et Patrono.[5]

ON BEN JONSON.

MIRROR of poets, mirror of our age!
Which her whole face beholding on thy stage,
Pleas'd and displeas'd with her own faults, endures
A remedy like those whom music cures.
Thou hast alone those various inclinations,
Which Nature gives to ages, sexes, nations,
So traced with thy all-resembling pen,
That whate'er custom has impos'd on men,
Or ill-got habit, which deforms them so,
That scarce a brother can his brother know,
Is represented to the wond'ring eyes
Of all that see or read thy comedies ;
Whoever in those glasses looks, may find
The spots return'd, or graces of his mind :
And by the help of so divine an art,
At leisure view, and dress his nobler part.
Narcissus cozened by that flatt'ring well,
Which nothing could but of his beauty tell,
Had here, discovering the deform'd estate
Of his fond mind, preserv'd himself with hate ;
But virtue too, as well as vice, is clad
In flesh and blood so well, that Plato had
Beheld what his high fancy once embraced
Virtue with colours, speech, and motion graced
The sundry postures of thy copious Muse,
Who would express a thousand tongues must use ;

[5] *Caroli Fitzgeofridi Affan. Oxoniæ.* 1601.

Digitized by Google

Whose fate's no less peculiar than thy art,
For as thou couldst all characters impart:
So none could render thine, who still escapes
Like Proteus in variety of shapes:
Who was, nor this, nor that, but all we find,
And all we can imagine in mankind.

E. WALLER.

ON MASTER BENJAMIN JONSON.

AFTER the rare arch-poet JONSON died,
The sock grew loathsome, and the buskin's pride,
Together with the stage's glory, stood
Each like a poor and pitied widowhood.
The cirque prophan'd was; and all postures rackt:
For men did strut, and stride, and stare, not act.
Then temper flew from words; and men did squeak,
Look red, and blow, and bluster, but not speak:
No holy rage, or frantic fires did stir,
Or flash about the spacious theatre.
No clap of hands, or shout, or praises-proof
Did crack the play-house sides, or cleave her roof.
Artless the scene was; and that monstrous sin
Of deep and arrant ignorance came in;
Such ignorance as theirs was, who once hist
At thy unequall'd play, the Alchemist:
Oh fie upon 'em! Lastly too, all wit
In utter darkness did, and still will sit;
Sleeping the luckless age out, till that she
Her resurrection has again with thee.

HERRICK's *Hesperides*, 1648, p. 173.

Digitized by Google

ON BEN JONSON.

HERE lies JONSON with the rest
Of the poets; but the best.
Reader, would'st thou more have known?
Ask his story, not this stone;
That will speak what this can't tell
Of his glory. So farewell!

Ibid. p. 342.

AN ODE

FOR BEN JONSON.

AH BEN!
Say how, or when
Shall we thy guests
Meet at those lyric feasts,
Made at the Sun,
The Dog,[6] the Triple Tun?
Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad;
And yet each verse of thine
Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.

My BEN
Or come agen;
Or send to us
Thy wits great over-plus:
But teach us yet
Wisely to husband it;
Lest we that talent spend:
And having once brought to an end

[6] The *Dog* is mentioned by Lord Falkland, in one of his letters to our author. "If there be any thing tolerable in my poem, it is somewhat you dropt negligently one day at the *Dog*, and I took up."

Digitized by Google

That precious stock; the store
Of such a wit: the world should have no more.

Ibid. p. 342.

TO BEN JONSON.

AS Martial's Muse by Cæsar's ripening rays
Was sometimes cherish'd, so thy happier days
Joy'd in the sunshine of thy royal JAMES,
Whose crown shed lustre on thy Epigrams:
But I, remote from favour's fostering heat,
O'er snowy hills my Muses' passage beat,
Where weeping rocks my harder fates lament,
And shuddering woods whisper my discontent.
What wonder then my numbers, that have roll'd
Like streams of Tigris, run so slow and cold![7]

TO THE SAME.

YET Ignorance with Envy chat,
In spight of both, thou fame shalt win;
Whose mass of learning seems like that,
Which Joseph gave to BENJAMIN. *Ibid.*

I DO not wonder that great JONSON's play
Was scorn'd so by the ignorant that day
It did appear in its most glorious shine,
And comely acting graced each learned line:
There was some reason for it, 'twas above
Their reach, their envy, their applause, or love.
When as the wiser few did it admire,
And warm'd their fancies at his genuine fire, &c.

C. G.[8]

[7] From *two Books of Epigrams* by T. Bancroft, 4to. 1639.

[8] The lines are prefixed with others to Nabbes's "*Unfortunate Mother*," 1640. I know not the author.

Digitized by Google

A. COCKAYNE TO MR. RICHARD BROME.

THEN"—(That is, "when the dull zealots shall give way," which yet sir Aston did not live to see)—

"Then shall learn'd Jonson reassume his seat,
Revive the *Phœnix* by a second heat;
Create the *Globe* anew, and people it
By those that flock to surfeit on his wit."—

Again, apologizing "to his worthy friend," Marmaduke Wevil, for attempting an epigram, he says,

"When I bethink me that great Jonson, (he,
Who all the ancient wit of Italy
And learned Greece, by his industrious pen
Transplanted hath, for his own countrymen,
And made our English tongue so swell that now
We scarce an equal unto it allow)
Writ epigrams, I tremble; and instead
Of praise, beseech a pardon when I'm read."

TERNITUR hic, nulla Famæ dignata tabella
JONSONII effigies; omni memorabilis ævo!
Qui mores hominum tenui depinxit avena
Stultitiam vulgi, curas, et inania vota—
Comicus ipse labor ridenti Dramata nomen
Efferat, et laudes *Mulier Taciturna* loquatur.
Exuberat docili vafer *Alchymista* lepore
Et *Vulpes* fallax, salo non parcente, placebit,[9] &c.

[9] From a poem on the monuments in *Westminster Abbey*, printed about the beginning of the last century.

Digitized by Google

AD BEN. JONSON.

FILIUS Hebræis Ben est: Son filius Anglis:
Filii es ergo duo: quot tibi quæso patres?
Si scio, disperiam: scio quod sit magnus Apollo
Unus de patribus, magne poeta, tuis.

J. DUNBAR, *Epig.* 1616.

BEN JONSON.

THE coin must sure for current sterling pass,
Stamp'd with old Chaucer's venerable face.
But JONSON found it of a gross allay,
Melted it down, and flung the scum away.
He dug pure silver from a Roman mine,
And prest his sacred image on the coin.
We all rejoic'd to see the pillag'd ore;
Our tongue inrich'd, which was so poor before.
Fear not, learn'd poet, our impartial blame,
Such thefts as these add lustre to thy name.—
All yield, consenting to sustain the yoke,
And learn the language which the victor spoke.
So Macedon's imperial hero threw
His wings abroad, and conquer'd as he flew.
Great Jonson's deeds stand parallel with his,
Are noble thefts, successful piracies,"[1] &c.

[1] From a spirited "Poem on the British Poets," of which I neglected to note the date.

Digitized by Google

UPON THE WORKS OF BEN JONSON.

ODE.[8]

I.

GREAT thou! whose firm establish'd glories stand,
And proudly their own fame command,
Above our pow'r to lessen or to raise,
And all, but the few heirs of thy brave genius, and thy bays;
Hail, mighty founder of our stage! for so I dare
Entitle thee, nor any modern censures fear,
Nor care what thy unjust detractors say;
They'll say, perhaps, that others did materials bring,
That others did the first foundations lay.
And glorious 'twas (we grant) but to begin:
But thou alone couldst finish the design,
All the fair model, and the workmanship was thine:
Some bold advent'rers might have been before,
Who durst the unknown world explore;
By them it was survey'd at distant view,
And here and there a cape, and line they drew,
Which only serv'd as hints, and marks to thee,
Who wast reserv'd to make the full discovery:
Art's compass to thy painful search we owe,
Whereby thou went'st so far, and we may after go,

[2] This Ode, written in the irregular and extravagant fashion of those days, is by Oldham; it contains, like all his pieces, amidst much harshness, many passages of elegance and vigour. If the judgment of the poet be impeached, it may soften censure to recollect that he was now a mere youth, being, I believe, not above twenty-three or four when it appeared. I have borrowed but a few stanzas from it, and those, perhaps, not the best. With these the list of "Ancient commendatory verses on Jonson," must close: it might easily have been extended to twice its length; but—*satis, quod sufficit.*

Digitized by Google

By that we may wit's vast, and trackless ocean try,
Content no longer, as before,
Dully to coast along the shore,
But steer a course more unconfin'd, and free,
Beyond the narrow bounds, that pent antiquity.

. . . . . .

IV.

Nature and Art together met, and join'd,
Made up the character of thy great mind.
That like a bright and glorious sphere,
Appear'd with numerous stars embellish'd o'er.
And much of light to thee, and much of influence bore.
This was the strong intelligence, whose pow'r
Turn'd it about, and did the unerring motions steer:
Concurring both like vital seed and heat,
The noble births they jointly did beget,
And hard 'twas to be thought,
Which most of force to the great generation brought:
So mingling elements compose our bodies frame,
Fire, water, earth, and air,
Alike their just proportions share,
Each undistinguish'd still remains the same,
Yet can't we say that either's here or there,
But all, we know not how, are scatter'd ev'ry where.

. . . . . .

IX.

Beshrew those envious tongues, who seek to blast thy bays,
Who spots in thy bright fame would find, or raise,
And say it only shines with borrow'd rays;
Rich in thyself, to whose unbounded store
Exhausted Nature could vouchsafe no more:
Thou could'st alone the empire of the stage maintain,
Could'st all its grandeur, and its port sustain,
Nor needest others subsidies to pay,
Needest no tax on foreign, or thy native country lay,

Digitized by Google

To bear the charges of thy purchas'd fame,
But thy own stock could raise the same,
Thy sole revenue all the vast expense defray:
Yet like some mighty conqueror in poetry,
Design'd by fate of choice to be
Founder of its new universal monarchy,
Boldly thou didst the learned world invade,
Whilst all around thy pow'rful genius sway'd,
Soon vanquish'd Rome, and Greece were made submit,
Both were thy humble tributaries made,
And thou return'dst in triumph with her captive wit.

x.

Unjust, and more ill-natur'd those,
Thy spiteful, and malicious foes,
Who on thy happiest talent fix a lye,
And call that slowness, which was care and industry.
Let me (with pride so to be guilty thought)
Share all thy wish'd reproach, and share thy shame,
If diligence be deem'd a fault,
If to be faultless must deserve their blame:
Judge of thyself alone (for none there were
Could be so just, or could be so severe)
Thou thy own works didst strictly try
By known and uncontested rules of poetry,
And gav'st thy sentence still impartially:
With rigour thou arraign'st each guilty line,
And spar'dst no criminal sense, because 'twas thine:
Unbrib'd with labour, love, or self-conceit,
(For never, or too seldom we,
Objects too near us, our own blemishes can see)
Thou didst not small'st delinquencies acquit,
But saws't them to correction all submit,
Saw'st execution done on all convicted crimes of wit.

. . . . . .

Digitized by Google

XIII.

Let meaner spirits stoop to low precarious fame,
Content on gross and coarse applause to live,
And what the dull and senseless rabble give,
Thou didst it still with noble scorn contemn;
Nor would'st that wretched alms receive,
The poor subsistence of some bankrupt, sordid name:
Thine was no empty vapour, rais'd beneath,
And form'd of common breath,
The false, and foolish fire, that's whisk'd about
By popular air, and glares awhile, and then goes out;
But 'twas a solid, whole, and perfect globe of light,
That shone all over, was all over bright,
And dar'd all sullying clouds, and fear'd no dark'ning night;
Like the gay monarch of the stars and sky,
Who wheresoe'er he does display
His sovereign lustre, and majestic ray,
Straight all the less, and petty glories nigh
Vanish, and shrink away,
O'erwhelm'd, and swallow'd by the greater blaze of day;
With such a strong, an awful and victorious beam
Appear'd, and ever shall appear, thy fame,
View'd, and ador'd by all th' undoubted race of wit,
Who only can endure to look on it.
The rest o'ercame with too much light,
With too much brightness dazzled, or extinguish'd quite:
Restless, and uncontroll'd it now shall pass
As wide a course about the world as he,
And when his long-repeated travels cease
Begin a new and vaster race,
And still tread round the endless circle of eternity.

Digitized by Google

PORTRAITS OF JONSON.

IT has been of late years the practice to accompany an account of the life and writings of every eminent author with a list of such resemblances of him as have descended to us. The transition from the writings of a poet to the lineaments of his countenance is at once natural and pleasing: *tenentur pictura oculi, aures cantibus.* The regret which is felt by every lover of the drama that no painting of Shakspeare has been authenticated, has no existence in the case of his friend. While the rude graver of Droeshoet, preserves in the title page of the first folio, the only genuine resemblance of Shakspeare, numerous portraits of Jonson remain to which no suspicion attaches. Their age, the excellence of their execution, their general correspondence with one another, concurring with their similarity to Vaughan's curious engraving, (to be hereafter particularised) all combine to establish their general authenticity. Ben does not appear to have felt any reluctance at having his features conveyed to posterity,—they were such as he needed not to be ashamed of,—nor is it likely, from his extensive attachments, even if he had felt this reserve, that the partiality of friendship should not have triumphed over his scruples. We *know*, however, that he submitted to the pallet.

"There is a painting of him in the picture gallery at Oxford: another at Knowle in Kent, the seat of the Duke of Dorset. At Petworth, lord Egremont's seat, is a portrait said to be of Ben Jonson, the authenticity of which must be doubted, since it bears no resemblance to any accredited likeness of the poet. The portrait from which the head prefixed to these volumes is engraved, is in the possession of George Isted, Esq. of Ecton. Lord Hardwick has a portrait of Ben, at his seat at Wimpole. 'An excellent original of Ben Jonson,' says Steevens, 'was lately bought at an obscure auction by Mr. Ritson of Gray's Inn, and might once have been companion to the portrait of Shakspeare, fortunately restored after having been lost to the public for a century and a half. They are, nevertheless, performances by very different artists. The face of Shakspeare was imitated by a delicate pencil: that of Jonson by a bolder hand. It is not, however, designed to appre-

Digitized by Google

ciate the distinct value of these pictures; although it must be allowed (as several undoubted originals of Ben are extant,) that an authentic head of Shakspeare is the greater desideratum.' The confidence which the commentator here expresses of the integrity of Mr. Felton's picture he failed in communicating to the public, and the desideratum of Steevens still remains. The portrait of Ben just referred to, and which some of our artists believe to be by Reubens,—was purchased at Ritson's sale by the late Mr. Fillingham, and is now in my possession. A very good head of Ben is in the hands of Mr. Boaden; it has the name of Gerard Hornthorst on the back, in a modern hand; the picture itself is co-eval with the poet. A still finer one is in the possession of lady Evelyn, to whom it descended from the amiable author of the *Sylva.* Other originals most probably exist, but I have only particularised such as come within my own limited knowledge.

"Engraved heads of Jonson are scarcely less numerous, though of inferior value. The earliest, and by far the most valuable is that by Vaughan; called by Granger a 4to. but which is of an 8vo. size. There is a good impression of it in the British Museum, and Mr. Woodburn, in St. Martin's Lane, has a still finer. A Latin subscription speaks of the poet as *recens sepultus.* It is a spirited and characteristic head, though not executed with Vaughan's best skill. The following lines are affixed to it:—

Jonsoni typus, ecce! qui furoris
Antistes sacer, Enthei camenis,
Vindex ingenii recens sepulti,
Antiquæ reparator unus artis,
Defunctæ pater eruditionis
Et scenæ veteris novator audax
Nec fœlix minus aut minus politus
Cui solus similis, Figura vivet. Ab. Holl.

"A small bust engraved by Marshall, 1640. A portrait by Elder, prefixed to an inaccurate edition of Jonson's Works, fol. 1692. A mezzotint by Faber from the painting in the Bodleian library, Oxford. Though a very common print, that by Vertue in 1711, folio, from Gerard Hornthorst's picture, is the most satisfactory portrait of Jonson. It was engraved by the industrious artist from a good picture, and was copied by the same burin in the same year for an elegant edition of Waller's poems printed for the well-known Jacob Tonson. The head prefixed to Whalley's edition of Ben's Works is also a reduction in an inferior style from the folio print, as is that in the set of poets. It was again reduced a few years since by Hole for a projected edition of the British Theatre, and *very appropriately* prefixed to the first volume of Shakspeare. An execrable copy of the same by Audinet was prefixed to a still more execrable

Digitized by Google

edition of Jonson's Plays printed for Stockdale; and a small oval in Harrison's biographical magazine. Ritson's portrait was copied a few years since by Freeman for the Mirror; and Mr. Boaden's picture by Evans, for the Cabinet.

"The portrait mentioned by Granger among the Houbracken heads, is now universally acknowledged to be spurious. It was, however, copied not long since by Baldwin in Catherine-street.

"Such is the list of portraits coming within my knowledge. It certainly comprehends the more important ones, but is *as certainly* imperfect, and I must leave the outline to be filled up by those who have more leisure and greater opportunities of obtaining information."

OCTAVIUS GILCHRIST.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

D. Joanni Rowe

Amico

Probatissimo

Hunc Amorem & delicias

suas Satiricorũ doctissimũ,

PERSIVM .cu

doctissimo commentario

sacrauit

Ben: Jonsonius.

&

L. M. D. D.

Nec prior est mihi parens Amico.

Digitized by Google

THE Autograph of Jonson appears in so many books, that it is probably familiar to the reader; a specimen of it, however, is here given, that the curiosity of no one may be disappointed. It will be seen that he wrote a very firm and clear hand. Many of his memorials to his friends are most beautifully written; the inscription in the opposite fac-simile is alluded to in vol. viii. I had not seen it when that note was drawn up. It stands in a blank leaf of Casaubon's Commentary on Persius, with which Jonson presented his friend. It has been already observed that the number of books which Jonson gave away is prodigious; some kind and cordial expression of his friendship accompanies each of them. Whalley has preserved one which fell into his hands—a beautiful copy of *Sejanus* with this epigraph: "To my perfect Friend Master Francis Crane, I erect this pillar of friendship, and leave it as the eternal witness of my love. Ben Jonson."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.

Digitized by Google

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.] This Comedy (as here given) was first presented in 1598, at the Globe, and, as the title says, by the Lord Chamberlain's Servants. It was not printed till 1616.

The first appearance of *Every Man in his Humour* on the stage, was either in 1595 or in 1596, when it was brought out at the Rose Theatre, by Henslowe and Alleyn, and proved exceedingly popular. Before it was purchased by the company at the Globe, it had undergone a variety of alterations; the names, the place of action, were radically altered; some of the dialogue was remodelled, and the incidents accommodated to the changes of the scene, which was brought from Italy to England. It has always been a favourite, and is still in possession of the stage.[1]

The 4to. edition appeared in 1603: there is not the least probability of its having been given to the press by Jonson, whose name is misspelt in the title-page, and who indeed, if the property of the play had been in his own hands, would naturally be inclined to suppress it altogether. It had neither dedication nor prologue, and was probably printed from the bookholder's copy at the *Rose*.

Jonson has subjoined the names of "the principal comedians;" these were "Will. Shakspeare, Aug. Philips, Hen. Condel, Will. Slye, Will. Kempe, Ric. Burbage, J. Hemings, Tho. Pope, Chr. Beeston, and John Duke:" this arrangement, however, does not enable us to appropriate the characters to the names, respectively.

[1] "Of Jonson's fifty dramas" (as Mr. A. Chalmers informs us) "there are not above three which preserve his name on the stage." Mr. Malone, too, talks of Jonson's fifty dramas, as if he were speaking of those of Shakspeare, or Beaumont and Fletcher. Did neither of these critics know, that of those *fifty* pieces, absurdly called *dramas* by them, four and thirty, at least, were never intended for the stage! But thus it ever is in the case of our author:—deception walks hand in hand with ignorance. "His first *play* (says the *Theatrum Poetarum*, 1800,) was *Every Man in his Humour*, 1598, 4to." (there is no such edition) "his *sixth*, *Part of King James's Entertainment in passing to his Coronation*" (an excellent *play*,) "his *forty-ninth*" (more excellent still) "the *King and Queen's Entertainment at Bolsover!*" p. 243. The fiftieth *play* is not specified; but, from its position, was probably the *Grammar*.

Digitized by Google

TO THE

MOST LEARNED, AND MY HONOURED FRIEND,

MASTER CAMDEN,

CLARENCIEUX.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

SIR,

THERE are, no doubt, a supercilious race in the world, who will esteem all office, done you in this kind, an injury; so solemn a vice it is with them to use the authority of their ignorance, to the crying down of POETRY, *or the professors: but my gratitude must not leave to correct their error; since I am none of those that can suffer the benefits conferred upon my youth to perish with my age. It is a frail memory that remembers but present things: and, had the favour of the times so conspired with my disposition, as it could have brought forth other, or better, you had had the same proportion, and number of the fruits, the first. Now I pray you to accept this; such wherein neither the confession of my manners shall make you blush; nor of my studies, repent you to have been the instructer: and for the profession of my thankfulness, I am sure it will, with good men, find either praise or excuse.*

Your True Lover,

BEN JONSON.[2]

[2] This Dedication was not printed until Jonson collected his works, in 1616; Camden was made king at arms in 1597, about which time it was probably written.

Digitized by Google

PROLOGUE.[3]

THOUGH need make many poets, and some such
As art and nature have not better'd much;
Yet ours for want hath not so loved the stage,
As he dare serve the ill customs of the age,
Or purchase your delight at such a rate,
As, for it, he himself must justly hate:
To make a child now swaddled, to proceed
Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,
Past threescore years; or, with three rusty swords,
And help of some few foot and half-foot words,
Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars,
And in the tyring-house bring wounds to scars.
He rather prays you will be pleas'd to see
One such to-day, as other plays shou'd be;
Where neither chorus wafts you o'er the seas,
Nor creaking throne comes down the boys to please:
Nor nimble squib is seen to make afeard
The gentlewomen; nor roll'd bullet heard
To say, it thunders; nor tempestuous drum
Rumbles, to tell you when the storm doth come;
But deeds, and language, such as men do use,
And persons, such as comedy would choose,

[3] This Prologue, which was probably written in 1596, (see p. xli.) does not appear to have been given to the press till 1616, when the author collected and published his works in a folio volume. It makes a manly appeal to the good sense of the people, and touches with spirit as well as humour on the defects and absurdities of the old stage. Lyly, Kyd, and above all, the rude

Digitized by Google

When she would shew an image of the times,
And sport with human follies, not with crimes.[4]
Except we make them such, by loving still
Our popular errors, when we know they're ill.
I mean such errors as you'll all confess,
By laughing at them, they deserve no less:
Which when you heartily do, there's hope left then,
You, that have so grac'd monsters, may like men.

dramatisers of our ancient chronicles, are evidently pointed at; writers who had already fallen under the ridicule of Sir Philip Sydney and others in terms still stronger than these. "Squibs," "battles," "flights over sea and land, in choruses," "drums," "trumpets," "targets," "creaking thrones," and all the woeful machinery of a poor stage had been the merry burden of many a prologue and epilogue from the first dawning of good taste under Shakspeare. Of this a hundred examples lie before me; but enough, perhaps, and more than enough, has been already produced on the subject.

The only allusion which it is not in my power to appropriate, is that to the "descending throne;" yet that some such marvellous piece of machinery was displayed to the admiring audience, is certain, as I have found it mentioned in several places: one I have preserved:

> "First for the gallery—in which the *throne*,
> To their amazement, *shall descend alone;*
> The rosin lightning flash, the monster spire
> Squibs, and ev'n words far hotter than his fire."
>
> *Epilogue to the Scholar.*

[4] *And sport with human follies, not with crimes.*] This distinction is made expressly from the precept of Aristotle; who assigns the τὸ γελοῖον, or the ridiculous, as the immediate subject of comedy, Poetic. Sect. 5; but makes the crimes of men, as being of a more serious nature, the particular object of the tragic poet. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KNOWELL, *an old Gentleman.*
EDWARD KNOWELL, *his Son.*
BRAINWORM, *the Father's Man.*
GEORGE DOWNRIGHT, *a plain Squire.*
WELLBRED, *his half Brother.*
KITELY, *a Merchant.*
CAPTAIN BOBADILL, *a Paul's Man.*[5]
Master STEPHEN, *a Country Gull.*
Master MATHEW, *the Town Gull.*
THOMAS CASH, *Kitely's Cashier.*
OLIVER COB, *a Water-bearer.*
Justice CLEMENT, *an old merry Magistrate.*
ROGER FORMAL, *his Clerk.*
WELLBRED'S *Servant.*

Dame KITELY, *Kitely's Wife.*
Mistress BRIDGET, *his Sister.*
TIB, *Cob's Wife.*

Servants, &c.

Scene, London.

[5] *A Paul's man.*] i. e. a frequenter of the middle aisle of St. Paul's cathedral, the common resort of cast captains, sharpers, gulls, and gossipers of every description.

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Street.*

Enter KNOWELL *at the door of his House.*

Knowell.

A GOODLY day toward, and a fresh morning.—Brainworm!

Enter BRAINWORM.

Call up your young master: bid him rise, sir.
Tell him, I have some business to employ him.
Brai. I will, sir, presently.
Know. But hear you, sirrah,
If he be at his book, disturb him not.
Brai. Very good, sir.[1] [*Exit.*
Know. How happy yet should I esteem myself,
Could I, by any practice, wean the boy

[1] *Very good, sir.*] So the quarto. The answer in the folio is, *Well, sir.* It signifies little which is taken, though it may be just necessary to note the variation.

Digitized by Google

From one vain course of study he affects.
He is a scholar, if a man may trust
The liberal voice of fame in her report,
Of good account in both our Universities,
Either of which hath favour'd him with graces:
But their indulgence must not spring in me
A fond opinion that he cannot err.
Myself was once a student,[2] and indeed,
Fed with the self-same humour he is now,
Dreaming on nought but idle poetry,
That fruitless and unprofitable art,
Good unto none, but least to the professors;
Which then, I thought the mistress of all knowledge:
But since, time and the truth have waked my judgment,
And reason taught me better to distinguish
The vain from the useful learnings.

Enter master STEPHEN.

Cousin Stephen,
What news with you, that you are here so early?

Step. Nothing, but e'en come to see how you do, uncle.

Know. That's kindly done; you are welcome, coz.

Step. Ay, I know that, sir; I would not have come else. How does my cousin Edward, uncle?

Know. O, well, coz; go in and see: I doubt he be scarce stirring yet.

[2] *Myself was once*, &c.] This is taken, with no great variation, from that eternal butt of ridicule to the wits of Jonson's days, the *Spanish Tragedy*. It is spoken by old Jeronimo, who, if we may believe Decker, was personated by our poet; so that the lines probably dwelt upon his memory:

> When I was young, I gave my mind,
> And 'plied myself to fruitless poetry;
> Which, though it profit the possessor nought,
> Yet is it passing pleasing to the world.

Digitized by Google

Step. Uncle, afore I go in, can you tell me, an he have e'er a book of the sciences of hawking and hunting; I would fain borrow it.

Know. Why, I hope you will not a hawking now, will you?

Step. No, wusse; but I'll practise against next year, uncle. I have bought me a hawk, and a hood, and bells, and all; I lack nothing but a book to keep it by.[3]

Know. O, most ridiculous!

Step. Nay, look you now, you are angry, uncle:—Why, you know an a man have not skill in the hawking and hunting languages now-a-days, I'll not give a rush for him: they are more studied than the Greek, or the Latin. He is for no gallant's company without them; and by gads-lid I scorn it,[4] I, so I do, to be a consort for

[3] *I lack nothing but a book to keep it by.*] Master Stephen certainly began at the wrong end: he had not far to seek, however, for the information which he wanted, as treatises on the "noble science" of hawking were to be found on every stall, and particularly in St. Paul's Churchyard. Here, among many others on the subject, *the Gentleman's Academie*, or the *Book of St. Albans*, was printed, and sold by Humphrey Lownds, 1595; and from its celebrity, might not improbably be the book which master Stephen had in view. I have expressed my detestation of this pursuit in the notes to the *Picture*, Massinger, vol. iii.

As some corroboration of what is there stated, it may not be amiss to subjoin a few words quoted by Whalley from Sir T. Eliot's *Governor*, 1542. "I would our falcons might be satisfied with the "division of their prey, as the falcons in Thracia were, that they "needed not to devour the hens of this realm in such number, "that unless it be shortly considered, our familiar poultry shall be "as scarce, as be now partridge and pheasant. I speak not this "in dispraise of the falcons, but of them which keepeth them like "cockneys. The mean gentlemen and honest householders which "care for the gentle entertainment of their friends, do find in their "dish that I say truth, and noblemen shall right shortly espy it, "when they come suddenly to their friend's house unpurveyed for "lack of long warning."

[4] *And by gads-lid I scorn it, I.*] I take the earliest opportunity

Digitized by Google

every hum-drum : hang them, scroyles ![5] there's nothing in them i'the world. What do you talk on it? Because I dwell at Hogsden, I shall keep company with none but the archers of Finsbury,[6] or the citizens that come a ducking to Islington ponds! A fine jest, i'faith! 'Slid, a gentleman mun show himself like a gentleman. Uncle, I pray you be not angry; I know what I have to do, I trow, I am no novice.

Know. You are a prodigal, absurd coxcomb, go to!
Nay, never look at me, 'tis I that speak;
Take 't as you will, sir, I'll not flatter you.
Have you not yet found means enow to waste
That which your friends have left you, but you must
Go cast away your money on a buzzard,[7]

of remarking, that the quarto is shockingly profane. What other vices the Poet brought from Flanders I do not wish to inquire; but it is to be feared, that our armies there, as uncle Toby says of those in his time, "swore terribly," and that Jonson was too apt a scholar. Better knowledge, or the dread of a licenser, subsequently taught him to correct this dangerous propensity, or at least, to indulge it with more caution, as a very visible improvement in this respect is manifested in the folio copies of this and every other play.

[5] *Hang them, scroyles!*] Scrophulous, scabby fellows. The word is used by Shakspeare:

"By heaven, the scroyles of Angiers flout you, kings."
King John. WHALLEY.

[6] ——— *the archers of Finsbury.*] In 1498, all the gardens which had continued time out of mind without Moorgate, to wit, about and beyond the lordship of Finsbury, were destroyed, and of them was made a plain field to shoot in. It was called *Finsbury* field, in which were three windmills, and here they usually shoot at twelve score. Stow, 1633, p. 913. In Jonson's time, this was the usual resort of the plainer citizens. People of fashion, or who aspired to be thought so, probably mixed but little in those parties; and hence we may account for the indignation of master Stephen at being suspected of such vulgarity. An idea of a similar kind occurs in Shakspeare: "As if thou never walk'dst further than Finsbury." *Henry IV. First Part*, A. iii. S. 2.

[7] *Go cast away your money on a* buzzard.] I prefer this to *kite*, which is the reading of the folio.

Digitized by Google

And know not how to keep it, when you have done?
O, it is comely! this will make you a gentleman!
Well, cousin, well, I see you are e'en past hope
Of all reclaim:—ay, so; now you are told on't,
You look another way.

Step. What would you ha' me do?

Know. What would I have you do? I'll tell you, kinsman;
Learn to be wise, and practise how to thrive;
That would I have you do: and not to spend
Your coin on every bauble that you fancy,
Or every foolish brain that humours you.
I would not have you to invade each place,
Nor thrust yourself on all societies,
Till men's affections, or your own desert,
Should worthily invite you to your rank.
He that is so respectless in his courses,
Oft sells his reputation at cheap market.
Nor would I, you should melt away yourself
In flashing bravery,[8] lest, while you affect
To make a blaze of gentry to the world,
A little puff of scorn extinguish it;
And you be left like an unsavoury snuff,
Whose property is only to offend.
I'd have you sober, and contain yourself,
Not that your sail be bigger than your boat;
But moderate your expenses now, at first,
As you may keep the same proportion still:
Nor stand so much on your gentility,
Which is an airy, and mere borrow'd thing,
From dead men's dust, and bones; and none of yours,
Except you make, or hold it.

[8] In flashing *bravery.*] Extravagant gaiety of apparel; in this sense *bravery* occurs so frequently in our old authors, that it seems scarcely necessary to notice it, unless when some ambiguity is created by a recollection of its modern sense.

Digitized by Google

Enter a Servant.

Who comes here?

Serv. Save you, gentlemen!

Step. Nay, we do not stand much on our gentility, friend;[9] yet you are welcome: and I assure you mine uncle here is a man of a thousand a year, Middlesex land. He has but one son in all the world, I am his next heir, at the common law, master Stephen, as simple as I stand here, if my cousin die, as there's hope he will: I have a pretty living o' mine own too, beside, hard by here.

Serv. In good time, sir.

Step. In good time, sir! why, and in very good time, sir! You do not flout, friend, do you?

Serv. Not I, sir.

Step. Not you, sir! you were not best, sir; an

[9] *We do not stand much on our gentility, friend.*] This answer is made with exquisite humour. Stephen piques himself on being a gentleman; Knowell had just reproved him for a rough illiberal behaviour, and cautions him not to presume upon his birth and fortune. Master Stephen doth not seem to relish this advice, but at the entrance of the servant, he discovers his regard for what his uncle had been saying, by the repetition of his last words. WHAL.

I am doubtful whether Whalley has entered much into the poet's drift. The answer is, indeed, exquisitely humorous; but it seems to be levelled at the little effect which salutary counsel has on such compounds of imbecility and vanity as master Stephen. Of all the instructions delivered in this admirable speech, he avails himself but of one, and that one affects his self-importance!—Cervantes has touched this foible of little minds with his usual felicity. While the knight of La Mancha is delivering the most grave and weighty instructions to Sancho respecting his conduct in his new government, the squire listens with inflexible apathy; but when he proceeds to recommend humility to him, on account of his low estate, when "he kept hogs," Sancho interrupts him with unusual vivacity: True, quoth the squire, but that was while I was a boy; for when I grew older, I kept geese, and not hogs! "*Así es verdad*," *respondió Sancho*, "*pero fué quando era muchacho; pero despues algo hombrecillo, gansos fuéron los que guardé, que no puercos!*"

Digitized by Google

you should, here be them can perceive it, and that quickly too; go to: and they can give it again soundly too, an need be.

Serv. Why, sir, let this satisfy you; good faith, I had no such intent.

Step. Sir, an I thought you had, I would talk with you, and that presently.

Serv. Good master Stephen, so you may, sir, at your pleasure.

Step. And so I would, sir, good my saucy companion! an you were out o' mine uncle's ground, I can tell you; though I do not stand upon my gentility neither, in't.

Know. Cousin, cousin, will this ne'er be left?

Step. Whoreson, base fellow! a mechanical serving-man! By this cudgel, an 'twere not for shame, I would——

Know. What would you do, you peremptory gull?[1]
If you cannot be quiet, get you hence.
You see, the honest man demeans himself
Modestly tow'rds you, giving no reply
To your unseason'd, quarrelling, rude fashion;
And still you huff it, with a kind of carriage
As void of wit, as of humanity.
Go, get you in; 'fore heaven, I am ashamed
Thou hast a kinsman's interest in me.

[*Exit master* STEPHEN.

Serv. I pray, sir, is this master Knowell's house?

Know. Yes, marry is it, sir.

Serv. I should enquire for a gentleman here, one master Edward Knowell; do you know any such, sir, I pray you?

[1] ——— *you peremptory* gull?] Master Stephen does not escape quite so well in the quarto, where he is termed a peremptory *ass*. As the former word occurs frequently in Jonson, and as, in the Dramatis Personæ of the present play, the two witlings, Mathew

Digitized by Google

Know. I should forget myself else, sir.

Serv. Are you the gentleman? cry you mercy, sir: I was required by a gentleman in the city, as I rode out at this end o' the town, to deliver you this letter, sir.

Know. To me, sir! . What do you mean? pray you remember your court'sy. [*Reads.*] *To his most selected friend, master Edward Knowell.* What might the gentleman's name be, sir, that sent it? Nay, pray you be cover'd.

Serv. One master Wellbred, sir.

Know. Master Wellbred! A young gentleman, is he not?

Serv. The same, sir; master Kitely married his sister; the rich merchant in the Old Jewry.

Know. You say very true.—Brainworm!

Enter BRAINWORM.

Brai. Sir.

and Stephen, are characterised as the town and country gulls, it may not be amiss, in this place, to give the admirable definition of them, by Sir J. Davis, *Epig.* ii.

"Oft in my laughing rimes I name a gull,
"But this new terme will many questions breede,
"Therefore at first I will expresse at full
"Who is a true and perfect gull indeede:
"A gull is he which fears a velvet gowne,
"And when a wench is brave, dares not speak to her;
"A gull is he which traverses the towne,
"And is for marriage knowne a common wooer.
"A gull is he which, while he proudly weares
"A silver hilted rapier by his side,
"Indures the lyes, and knocks about the eares,
"While in his sheath his sleeping sword doth bide:
"A gull is he which weares good hansome cloathes,
"And stands in presence stroaking up his hayre,
"And fills up his unperfect speech with oathes,
"But speaks not one wise word throughout the yeare.
"But, to define a gull in termes precise,
"A gull is he which seemes, and is not, wise."

Digitized by Google

Know. Make this honest friend drink here: pray you, go in. [*Exeunt* BRAINWORM *and* Servant.
This letter is directed to my son:
Yet I am Edward Knowell too, and may,
With the safe conscience of good manners, use
The fellow's error to my satisfaction.
Well, I will break it ope, (old men are curious,)
Be it but for the style's sake and the phrase;
To see if both do answer my son's praises,
Who is almost grown the idolater
Of this young Wellbred. What have we here?
What's this? [*Reads.*

Why, Ned, I beseech thee,[2] *hast thou forsworn all thy friends in the Old Jewry? or dost thou think us all Jews that inhabit there? yet, if thou dost, come over, and but see our frippery;*[3] *change an old shirt for a whole smock with us: do not conceive that antipathy between us and Hogsden, as was between Jews and hogs-flesh. Leave thy vigilant father alone, to number over his green apricots, evening and morning, on the north-west wall: an I had been his son, I had saved him the labour long since, if taking in all the young wenches that pass by at the back-door, and codling every kernel of the fruit for them, would have served. But, prithee, come over to me quickly, this*

[2] *Why, Ned, I beseech thee,* &c.] Jonson has shown his judgment in rewriting this letter. As it stands in the quarto, it is pert, silly, and intolerably affected.

[3] ——— *and but see our* frippery;] *Fripperie,* Fr. a place where old clothes are exposed for sale. So Massinger of Luke:

"He shews like a walking *frippery.*"

And Shakspeare:

"——— O worthy Stephano, what a *wardrobe* is here for thee!

Cal. Let it alone, it is but trash.

Trim. O, ho, monster; we know what belongs to a *frippery.*"
Tempest.

Digitized by Google

morning; I have such a present for thee!—our Turkey company never sent the like to the Grand Signior. One is a rimer, sir, of your own batch, your own leaven; but doth think himself poet-major of the town, willing to be shown, and worthy to be seen. The other—I will not venture his description with you, till you come, because I would have you make hither with an appetite. If the worst of 'em be not worth your journey, draw your bill of charges, as unconscionable as any Guildhall verdict will give it you, and you shall be allowed your viaticum.

From the Windmill.[4]

From the Bordello it might come as well,
The Spittle, or Pict-hatch.[5] Is this the man
My son hath sung so, for the happiest wit,

[4] *From the Windmill.*] This house then stood at the corner of the Old Jewry, towards Lothbury, and was remarkable for the various changes it had successively undergone. The Jews used it at first for a Synagogue; afterwards it came into the possession of a certain order of friars called *Fratres de Sacco*, from their being clothed in sackcloth. In process of time, it was converted to a private house, wherein several mayors resided, and kept their mayoralty. In the days of *Stow*, from whom this account is taken, it was a tavern, and had for the sign a *Windmill.* WHAL.

[5] *From the* Bordello *it might come as well,*
The Spittle, *or* Pict-hatch.] From the brothel or stews, for which the Bankside in Southwark was at this time noted.—The *Spittle*, Whalley says, means in general an hospital; but the fact is not so: it had, with our ancestors, an appropriate signification, as I have proved in the notes to Massinger, (vol. iv. p. 52,) and meant a house for lazars, &c. Here the allusion is local, and, without doubt, applies to the *Loke* or *Lock*, a spittle for venereal patients, situated, as Whalley observes, at Kingsland, in the neighbourhood of *Hogsden*. *Pict-hatch* was a famous receptacle of prostitutes and pickpockets: it is mentioned with other places of equal notoriety, in our author's 12th Epigram:

"———— Squires
"That haunt *Pict-hatch*, Marsh Lambeth, and Whitefryers,"

and is generally supposed to have been in Turnmill, or, as Stow calls it, Tremill-street, near Clerkenwell Green; which, in the words of

Digitized by Google

The choicest brain, the times have sent us forth!
I know not what he may be in the arts,
Nor what in schools; but, surely, for his manners,
I judge him a profane and dissolute wretch;
Worse by possession of such great good gifts,
Being the master of so loose a spirit.
Why, what unhallow'd ruffian would have writ
In such a scurrilous manner to a friend!
Why should he think I tell my apricots,
Or play the Hesperian dragon with my fruit,
To watch it? Well, my son, I had thought, you
Had had more judgment to have made election
Of your companions, than t' have ta'en on trust
Such petulant, jeering gamesters, that can spare
Nor argument or subject from their jest.
But I perceive affection makes a fool
Of any man too much the father.[6]—Brainworm!

Enter BRAINWORM.

Brai. Sir.
Know. Is the fellow gone that brought this letter?
Brai. Yes, sir, a pretty while since.
Know. And where is your young master?

Mrs. Quickly, lay anciently "under an ill name." So in the *Blacksmith's Song*, by J. Smith:

"Smithfield he did free from dirt,
"And he had sure good reason for 't,
"It stood very near to *Venus' court*."

Here a note by the author tells us, that "the place meant is *Turnmill-street*." *Wit Restored.*

[6] *Of any man too much the father.*] Hitherto every change of moment has been for the better; yet the concluding lines of this soliloquy, as they stand in the quarto, have merit:

Well, I had thought my son could not have stray'd
So far from judgment, as to mart himself
Thus cheaply, in the open trade of scorn,
To jeering folly, and fantastic humour:
But now I see Opinion is a fool,
And hath abused my senses.

Digitized by Google

Brai. In his chamber, sir.

Know. He spake not with the fellow, did he?

Brai. No, sir, he saw him not.

Know. Take you this letter, and deliver it my son; but with no notice that I have opened it, on your life.

Brai. O lord, sir! that were a jest indeed. [*Exit.*

Know. I am resolved I will not stop his journey,
Nor practise any violent means to stay
The unbridled course of youth in him; for that
Restrain'd, grows more impatient; and in kind
Like to the eager, but the generous grey-hound,
Who ne'er so little from his game with-held,
Turns head, and leaps up at his holder's throat.
There is a way[7] of winning more by love,
And urging of the modesty, than fear:
Force works on servile natures, not the free.
He that's compell'd to goodness, may be good,
But 'tis but for that fit; where others, drawn
By softness and example, get a habit.
Then, if they stray, but warn them, and the same
They should for virtue have done, they'll do for shame. [*Exit.*

[7] *There is a way, &c.*] This, as Whalley observes, is from *the Adelphi* of Terence: it is very happily adapted to the sentiments of the speaker; and, with great spirit, has more than the usual degree of freedom:

Pudore, et liberalitate liberos
Retinere, satius esse credo, quàm metu.
Malo coactus qui suum officium facit,
Dum id rescitum iri credit, tantisper cavet
Hoc patrium est, potius consuefacere filium
Suâ sponte recte facere, quam alieno metu.

The whole of this fine speech is much improved from the quarto, which, for the eight last lines, only gives us this tame couplet:

Therefore I'll study by some milder drift
To call my son unto a happier shrift.

Digitized by Google

SCENE II. *A Room in* KNOWELL'S *House.*

Enter E. KNOWELL, *with a Letter in his hand, followed by* BRAINWORM.

E. Knowell.

DID he open it, say'st thou?

Brai. Yes, o' my word, sir, and read the contents.

E. Know. That scarce contents me. What countenance, prithee, made he in the reading of it? was he angry, or pleased?

Brai. Nay, sir, I saw him not read it, nor open it, I assure your worship.

E. Know. No! how knows't thou then, that he did either?

Brai. Marry, sir, because he charged me, on my life, to tell no body that he open'd it; which, unless he had done, he would never fear to have it revealed.

E. Know. That's true: well, I thank thee, Brainworm.

Enter STEPHEN.

Step. O, Brainworm, didst thou not see a fellow here in what-sha-call-him doublet? he brought mine uncle a letter e'en now.

Brai. Yes, master Stephen: what of him?

Step. O, I have such a mind to beat him—— where is he, canst thou tell?

Brai. Faith, he is not of that mind; he is gone, master Stephen.

Step. Gone! which way? when went he? how long since?

Brai. He is rid hence; he took horse at the street-door.

Digitized by Google

Step. And I staid in the fields! Whoreson Scanderbag rogue![8] O that I had but a horse to fetch him back again!

Brai. Why, you may have my master's gelding, to save your longing, sir.

Step. But I have no boots, that's the spight on't.

Brai. Why, a fine wisp of hay roll'd hard, master Stephen.

Step. No, faith, it's no boot to follow him now:[9] let him e'en go and hang. Prithee, help to truss me a little: he does so vex me—

Brai. You'll be worse vex'd when you are truss'd, master Stephen. Best keep unbraced, and walk yourself till you be cold; your choler may founder you else.

Step. By my faith, and so I will, now thou tell'st me on't: how dost thou like my leg, Brainworm?

Brai. A very good leg, master Stephen; but the woollen stocking does not commend it so well.

Step. Foh! the stockings be good enough, now summer is coming on, for the dust: I'll have a pair of silk against winter, that I go to dwell in the town. I think my leg would shew in a silk hose—[1]

[8] *Whoreson* Scanderbag *rogue!*] Scanderbeg is the name which the Turks (in allusion to Alexander the Great), gave to the brave Castriot, chief of Albania, with whom they had continued wars. His life had been just translated from the French, by I. Gentleman, (1596,) and was sufficiently romantic to attract the notice of the public.

[9] *Step. No, faith, it's no* boot *to follow him now.*] The rage of punning has seized all the actors in this scene. It may tend, perhaps, to humble the pride of those who plume themselves on their dexterity in this notable art, to observe that Master Stephen is by far the most successful of the party in his attempts.

[1] *I think my leg would shew in a silk hose.*] The humour of these half-witted gallants, with relation to the furniture of their legs, is taken notice of by Shakspeare:

"*Sir Tob.* I did think by the excellent constitution of thy leg, "it was formed under the star of a galliard.

Digitized by Google

Brai. Believe me, master Stephen, rarely well.

Step. In sadness, I think it would: I have a reasonable good leg.

Brai. You have an excellent good leg, master Stephen; but I cannot stay to praise it longer now, and I am very sorry for it. [*Exit.*

Step. Another time will serve, Brainworm. Gramercy for this.

E. Know. Ha, ha, ha!

Step. 'Slid, I hope he laughs not at me; an he do—

E. Know. Here was a letter indeed, to be intercepted by a man's father, and do him good with him! He cannot but think most virtuously, both of me, and the sender, sure, that make the careful costermonger of him in our familiar epistles. Well, if he read this with patience I'll be gelt, and troll[2] ballads

"*Sir And.* Aye, 'tis strong; and it does indifferent well in a "flame-coloured stock." *Twelfth-Night*, A. i. S. 4.

This passion for *silk stockings* is glanced at by other dramatic writers. So, in the *Miseries of Inforced Marriage:* "This town craves maintenance, *silk stockings* must be had." And, in *The Hog hath lost his Pearl*, 1614: "Good parts without habiliments of gallantry, are no more set by in these times, than a good leg in a *woollen* stocking." WHAL.

Bobadill, who is the mirror of fashion in this play, is furnished with silk stockings; and it is not one of the least evils, with which the humorous malice of the poet has pursued his disgrace, to make him pawn this favourite article of gallantry, to procure a warrant for binding over the turbulent Downright to keep the peace. See A. iv.

[2] *And* troll *ballads for master John Trundle.*

"—— Will you *troul* the catch
"You taught me but while-ere?" *The Tempest.*

And Milton,

"To dress, to *troll* the tongue, and roll the eye." WHAL.

With respect to *master John Trundle*, he was a printer, who lived at the sign of the "Nobody," (a very humble designation,) in Barbican. It appears, however, that he dealt in something better than *ballads*, having published Green's *Tu Quoque*, *Westward for Smelts*, and other fugitive and popular pieces of the day.

Digitized by Google

for master John Trundle yonder, the rest of my mortality. It is true, and likely, my father may have as much patience as another man, for he takes much physic; and oft taking physic makes a man very patient. But would your packet, master Wellbred, had arrived at him in such a minute of his patience! then we had known the end of it, which now is doubtful, and threatens—— [*sees master* STEPHEN.] What, my wise cousin! nay, then I'll furnish our feast with one gull more toward the mess. He writes to me of a brace, and here's one, that's three: oh, for a fourth Fortune, if ever thou'lt use thine eyes, I entreat thee——

Step. Oh, now I see who he laughed at: he laughed at somebody in that letter. By this good light, an he had laughed at me——

E. Know. How now, cousin Stephen, melancholy?

Step. Yes, a little: I thought you had laughed at me, cousin.

E. Know. Why, what an I had, coz? what would you have done?

Step. By this light, I would have told mine uncle.

E. Know. Nay, if you would have told your uncle, I did laugh at you, coz.

Step. Did you, indeed?

E. Know. Yes, indeed.

Step. Why then——

E. Know. What then?

Step. I am satisfied; it is sufficient.

E. Know. Why, be so, gentle coz: and, I pray you, let me intreat a courtesy of you. I am sent for this morning by a friend in the Old Jewry, to come to him; it is but crossing over the fields to Moorgate: Will you bear me company? I protest, it is not to draw you into bond, or any plot against the state, coz.

Step. Sir, that's all one an it were; you shall

Digitized by Google

command me twice so far as Moorgate, to do you good in such a matter. Do you think I would leave you? I protest[3]——

E. Know. No, no, you shall not protest, coz.

Step. By my fackings, but I will, by your leave: —I'll protest more to my friend, than I'll speak of at this time.

E. Know. You speak very well, coz.

Step. Nay, not so neither, you shall pardon me: but I speak to serve my turn.

E. Know. Your turn, coz! do you know what you say? A gentleman of your sort,[4] parts, carriage, and estimation, to talk of your turn in this company, and to me alone, like a tankard-bearer at a conduit![5]

[3] *I* protest.] There appears to have been something affected or ridiculous, at this time, in using the word *protest*. Thus the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, A. ii. S. 4: "I will tell her, sir, that you do *protest*; which, as I take it, is a 'gentleman-like offer.'" And in the old comedy of *Sir Giles Goosecap*, 1606, as cited by Mr. Steevens, "There is not the best duke's son in France dares "say, *I protest*, till he be one and thirty years old at least; for "the inheritance of that word is not to be possessed before." WHAL.

[4] *A gentleman of your* sort.] That is, rank or degree in life. So Shakspeare:

—— none of nobler *sort*
Would so offend a virgin. *Midsum. Night's Dream.*

And Drayton

Men most select, of special worth and *sort*.
Barons Wars. WHAL.

[5] *like a* tankard-bearer *at a conduit!*] Before the New River was brought to London, the city was chiefly supplied with water from conduits, which the patriotism of the wealthier citizens had erected in considerable numbers. From these it was fetched, by a particular class of men called *tankard-bearers*, (of which *Cob*, who makes his appearance in this play, was one,) and sold to the citizens at so much a turn. Where a professed tankard-bearer was not employed, it was the business of the servants and junior apprentices, to fetch water for the use of the family; and to this there are innumerable allusions in our old writers. "I had rather," says Sir J. Harrington, in his treatise on Play, "one of

Digitized by Google

fie! A wight that, hitherto, his every step hath left the stamp of a great foot behind him, as every word the savour of a strong spirit, and he! this man! so graced, gilded, or, to use a more fit metaphor, so tinfoiled by nature, as not ten housewives pewter, again a good time,[6] shews more bright to the world than he! and he! (as I said last, so I say again, and still shall say it) this man! to conceal such real ornaments as these, and shadow their glory, as a milliner's wife does her wrought stomacher, with a smoaky lawn, or a black cyprus![7] O, coz! it cannot be answered; go not about it: Drake's old ship[8] at

my sonnes were a *tankard-bearer* that wears sometymes his silke sleaves at the church on Sunday, than a cosener."

[6]— *again a* good time.] i. e. against some festival, such as Christmas, &c., when housewives are careful to set out their furniture to the best advantage. WHAL.

[7] *or a black* cyprus.] A kind of thin, transparent crape, so called from being originally manufactured in the island of that name. WHAL.

It is mentioned by Shakspeare:

Cyprus, black as any crow. *Winter's Tale.*

And again by our author,

— one half drawn
In *solemn cyprus*, th' other cobweb lawn.

[8] *Drake's* old ship.] After the return of this celebrated navigator from his voyage round the world, his ship was laid up at Deptford, by queen Elizabeth, where it was long visited as a singular curiosity, and regarded, as appears from the verses of Cowley and others, with no small degree of national pride and veneration. Much of the fondness with which Elizabeth is yet viewed by the common people, is due to her happy dexterity in flattering the prejudices of the nation, and perhaps her own, (for Bess, to use her proper words, *had an English heart*,) by exalting every circumstance, and perpetuating every memorial, that tended to its glory, or brought to mind its success in arts or arms. An object, which has been greatly overlooked by almost every government since her time, who have abandoned to individual patriotism those tributes to national honour, which are only effective when paid by the state. I regret to say that Barrow found the ship in which Cook had twice circumnavigated the globe, at Rio Janeiro,

Digitized by Google

Deptford may sooner circle the world again. Come, wrong not the quality of your desert, with looking downward, coz; but hold up your head, so: and let the idea of what you are be pourtrayed in your face, that men may read in your physnomy, *here within this place is to be seen the true, rare, and accomplished monster, or miracle of nature,* which is all one. What think you of this, coz?

Step. Why, I do think of it; and I will be more proud, and melancholy, and gentlemanlike than I have been, I'll insure you.

E. Know. Why, that's resolute, master Stephen! —Now, if I can but hold him up to his height, as it is happily begun, it will do well for a suburb humour:[9] we may hap have a match with the city, and play him for forty pound.—Come, coz.

Step. I'll follow you.

E. Know. Follow me! you must go before.

Step. Nay, an I must, I will. Pray you, shew me, good cousin. [*Exeunt.*

whither she was carried by the Portugueze, who had purchased her for an inconsiderable sum! His feelings on the occasion are just and proper.

[9] *It will do well for a* suburb humour.] A low humour, not tinctured with urbanity; fitted to the tastes of the inferior people who usually reside in the suburbs. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

SCENE III. *The Lane before* COB'S *House.*[1]

Enter master MATHEW.

Mathew.

I THINK this be the house: what, ho!

Enter COB.

Cob. Who's there? O, master Mathew! give your worship good morrow.

Mat. What, Cob! how dost thou, good Cob? dost thou inhabit here, Cob?

Cob. Ay, sir, I and my lineage have kept a poor house here, in our days.

Mat. Thy lineage, monsieur Cob! what lineage, what lineage?

Cob. Why, sir, an ancient lineage, and a princely. Mine ance'try came from a king's belly, no worse man; and yet no man neither, by your worship's leave, I did lie in that, but herring, the king of fish,[2] (from his belly I proceed,) one of the monarchs of

[1] *The lane before Cob's House.*] Mr. Waldron observes that in a part of *Black Friars* called Broad Way, there is an avenue still called *Cob's Court;* and not improbably from its having formerly been inhabited by water-bearers; to which class of people Jonson's character of *Cob* seems to have given a sort of celebrity. Not to deprive any part of the city, however, of its due share of honour, it should be mentioned that "Cob's house stood by the Wall" at the bottom of Coleman-street.

[2] *herring, the king of fish.*] If the reader wishes to know how the herring arrived at this dignity, he may consult Nashe's "*Lenten Stuffe,*" where he will find more than enough on the subject. Briefly, a quarrel having arisen between the "land fowls, and the fishes," the latter assembled "to elect a king that might lead them into battle." On canvassing the respective claims of the competitors, "none woone the day but the *herring*, whom all their clamorous suffrages, &c., saluted with *Vive le roy!* God save the king!—and from that time to this he hath gone abroad with an army, and never stirs without it." 4to. 1599. It is not impro-

Digitized by Google

the world, I assure you. The first red herring that was broiled in Adam and Eve's kitchen, do I fetch my pedigree from, by the harrot's book.[3] His cob[4] was my great, great, mighty great grandfather.

Mat. Why mighty, why mighty, I pray thee?

Cob. O, it was a mighty while ago, sir, and a mighty great cob.

Mat. How knowst thou that?

Cob. How know I! why, I smell his ghost ever and anon.

Mat. Smell a ghost! O unsavory jest! and the ghost of a herring cob?

Cob. Ay, sir: With favour of your worship's nose, master Mathew, why not the ghost of a herring cob, as well as the ghost of Rasher Bacon?

Mat. Roger Bacon, thou would'st say.

Cob. I say Rasher Bacon. They were both broiled on the coals; and a man may smell broiled meat, I hope! you are a scholar, upsolve me that, now.

Mat. O raw ignorance!—Cob, canst thou shew me of a gentleman, one captain Bobadill, where his lodging is?

bable that this title was fondly conferred on the herring by the Northern nations, in consequence of the immense advantages which they derived from the fishery; and in which our rivals the Dutch were at this time known to be very largely participating.

[3] *By the* harrot's *book.*] The old and obsolete mode of spelling *herald*, of which it is a corruption: herald (*here healt*) is, or rather was, the champion of an army; what it is now I cannot tell.

[4] *His* Cob, *&c.*] *Cob* (*kop*, Belg.) is head. Our old writers used the word as a distinctive mark of bulk; thus *cob*-loaf was the largest loaf of the batch, *cob*-apple, *cob*-nut, &c., were respectively the largest apples and nuts of the crop, &c. But *cob* was more commonly applied to fishes, and of these chiefly to the red and white herring, whence it became a cant term for the whole fish. Jonson is here in his "old lunes;" he is never weary of playing with names, though no sport can well be "more flat and unprofitable."

Digitized by Google

Cob. O, my guest, sir, you mean.

Mat. Thy guest! alas, ha, ha, ha!

Cob. Why do you laugh, sir? do you not mean captain Bobadill?

Mat. Cob, pray thee advise thyself well: do not wrong the gentleman, and thyself too. I dare be sworn, he scorns thy house, he! he lodge in such a base obscure place as thy house! Tut, I know his disposition so well, he would not lie in thy bed if thou'dst give it him.

Cob. I will not give it him though, sir. Mass, I thought somewhat was in it, we could not get him to bed all night: Well, sir; though he lie not on my bed, he lies on my bench: an't please you to go up, sir, you shall find him with two cushions under his head, and his cloke wrapt about him, as though he had neither won nor lost, and yet, I warrant, he ne'er cast better in his life,[5] than he has done to-night.

Mat. Why, was he drunk?

Cob. Drunk, sir! you hear not me say so: perhaps he swallow'd a tavern-token,[6] or some such device, sir, I have nothing to do withal. I deal with water and not with wine.—Give me my tankard there, ho!—God be wi' you, sir. It's six a clock: I should have carried two turns, by this.—What ho! my stopple; come.

[5] *He ne'er* cast *better in his life.*] A quibble, very worthy of Cob, between casting dice, and vomiting. It is found in Shakspeare, and in all our old dramatists.

[6] *Perhaps he swallow'd a tavern*-token.] This, as Reed observes, was a cant term for getting drunk. *Tokens* were promissory pieces of brass or copper, which tradesmen, in a scarcity of small money, were sometimes permitted to coinfor themselves; a practice which has lately been revived. That most of them would travel to the *tavern*, may be easily supposed; and hence perhaps the name. Their usual value seems to have been a farthing.

Digitized by Google

Enter TIB *with a water-tankard.*

Mat. Lie in a water-bearer's house! a gentleman of his havings! Well, I'll tell him my mind.[7]

Cob. What, Tib; shew this gentleman up to the captain. [*Exit* TIB *with master* MATHEW.] Oh, an my house were the Brazen-head now! faith it would e'en speak *Moe fools yet.* You should have some now would take this master Mathew to be a gentleman, at the least. His father's an honest man, a worshipful fishmonger, and so forth; and now does he creep, and wriggle into acquaintance with all the brave gallants about the town, such as my guest is, (O, my guest is a fine man!) and they flout him invincibly.[8] He useth every day to a merchant's house where I serve water, one master Kitely's, in the Old Jewry; and here's the jest, he is in love with

[7] *Lie in a water-bearer's house! a gentleman of his* havings! *Well, I'll tell him my mind.*] This, master Mathew forgets to do, though Bobadill seems to lead the way to it. *Havings* are possessions: it is thus used by Shakspeare, "the gentleman is of no *havings*." *Merry Wives of Windsor.* And by our author's imitator, Randolph:

> One of your *havings*, and thus cark and care!
> *Muses Looking Glass.*

Instead of *havings*, the quarto reads *note*, which seems the better word, as Bobadill is less boastful of his fortune, than of his distinguished reputation.

[8] *And they flout him* invincibly.] I have some doubt whether we rightly comprehend this word, as understood by our ancestors. Here, and elsewhere, it is used where we should now write *invisibly*. "He was so forlorn," says Falstaff of Justice Shallow, "that his dimensions to any thick sight were *invincible*." This reading Steevens pronounces to be absolutely spurious; and adopts, with great applause, *invisible*, "the *correction* of Rowe." The correction, as it is termed, is sufficiently obvious to those who are not conversant with our old writers; but not so, I should have thought, to Steevens. However this may be, I have met with the expression so frequently, that I incline to the opinion of the judicious Crites, and think "there is need of more deliberation," before it be utterly proscribed.

Digitized by Google

my master's sister, Mrs. Bridget, and calls her mistress; and there he will sit you a whole afternoon sometimes, reading of these same abominable, vile, (a pox on 'em! I cannot abide them,) rascally verses, poetrie, poetrie, and speaking of interludes; 'twill make a man burst to hear him. And the wenches, they do so jeer, and ti-he at him——Well, should they do so much to me, I'd forswear them all, by the foot of Pharaoh! There's an oath! How many water-bearers shall you hear swear such an oath? O, I have a guest—he teaches me—he does swear the legiblest of any man christened: *By St. George! the foot of Pharaoh! the body of me! as I am a gentleman and a soldier!* such dainty oaths! and withal, he does take this same filthy roguish tobacco, the finest and cleanliest! it would do a man good to see the fume come forth at's tonnels.—Well, he owes me forty shillings, my wife lent him out of her purse, by sixpence at a time, besides his lodging: I would I had it![9] I shall have it, he says, the next action. Helter skelter, hang sorrow, care'll kill a cat, up-tails all, and a louse for the hangman. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *A room in* COB'S *House.*

BOBADILL *discovered lying on a bench.*

Bobadill.

HOSTESS, hostess!

Enter TIB.

Tib. What say you, sir?

Bob. A cup of thy small beer, sweet hostess.

[9] *I would I had it, &c.*] Rude and illiterate as the author has drawn Cob, he has yet made him enter into the characters of

Digitized by Google

Tib. Sir, there's a gentleman below would speak with you.

Bob. A gentleman! 'odso, I am not within.

Tib. My husband told him you were, sir.

Bob. What a plague——what meant he?

Mat. [*below*]. Captain Bobadill!

Bob. Who's there?—Take away the bason, good hostess![1]—Come up, sir.

Tib. He would desire you to come up, sir. You come into a cleanly house, here!

Enter MATHEW.

Mat. Save you, sir, save you, captain!

Bob. Gentle master Mathew! Is it you, sir? please you to sit down.

Mat. Thank you, good captain; you may see I am somewhat audacious.

Bob. Not so, sir. I was requested to supper last night by a sort[2] of gallants, where you were wish'd for, and drunk to, I assure you.

Bobadill and master Mathew with a shrewdness which is frequently found in people of his condition, and which evinces Jonson's strict observance of nature. The hortatory exclamations with which Cob concludes his soliloquy are either proverbial vulgarisms, or the burden of popular songs. *Up-tails-all* occurs in the *Fleire*, A. iii. "She every day sings *John for the king*, and is perfect at *Up-tails-all:*" and in the *Coxcomb*, A. i. where Silvio sings, "Then set your foot to my foot, and *Up-tails-all.*"

[1] Bob. *Take away the bason, good hostess.*

Tib. *He would desire you to come up, sir.* You come into a cleanly house, here!] Our facetious neighbours have attempted to translate this comedy into French, and succeeded, as might be expected, to a nicety. The version of what is quoted above, may serve, as well as any other passage, for a specimen:

Bob. *Emportez le basin, ma chère hotesse.*

Tib. *Ne craignez rien, monsieur, la chambre est propre.*

And it is from such exquisite blundering as this, that their critics presume to decide upon the taste and humour of the English stage!

[2] *By a* sort *of gallants.*] A *company.* "Yet how a *sort* of

Digitized by Google

Mat. Vouchsafe me, by whom, good captain?

Bob. Marry, by young Wellbred, and others.—Why, hostess, a stool here for this gentleman.

Mat. No haste, sir, 'tis very well.

Bob. Body o' me! it was so late ere we parted last night, I can scarce open my eyes yet; I was but new risen, as you came: how passes the day abroad, sir? you can tell.

Mat. Faith, some half hour to seven: Now trust me, you have an exceeding fine lodging here, very neat and private.

Bob. Ay, sir: sit down, I pray you. Master Mathew, in any case, possess[3] no gentlemen of our acquaintance with notice of my lodging.

Mat. Who, I, sir? no.

Bob. Not that I need to care who know it, for the cabbin is convenient; but in regard I would not be too popular, and generally visited, as some are.

Mat. True, captain, I conceive you.

Bob. For, do you see, sir, by the heart of valour in me, except it be to some peculiar and choice spirits, to whom I am extraordinarily engaged, as yourself, or so, I could not extend thus far.

Mat. O Lord, sir! I resolve[4] so.

Bob. I confess I love a cleanly and quiet privacy, above all the tumult and roar of fortune. What new book have you there? What! Go by, Hieronymo?[5]

fugitives, who had quitted without stroke their own country, should so soon win another, appears not." Milton's *Hist. of Brit.* The word occurs so frequently in this sense, that no further notice of it seems necessary.

[3] Possess *no gentlemen of our acquaintance with notice of my lodging.*] i. e. *inform* no gentlemen, &c.

[4] *I* resolve *so.*] I am *convinced* of it. See Massinger, vol. I. 275.

[5] *What! Go by, Hieronymo?*] This alludes to the following passage in the *Spanish Tragedy:*

Digitized by Google

Mat. Ay; did you ever see it acted? Is't not well penn'd?

Bob. Well-penn'd! I would fain see all the poets of these times pen such another play as that was:[6] they'll prate and swagger, and keep a stir of art and devices, when, as I am a gentleman, read 'em, they are the most shallow, pitiful, barren fellows, that live upon the face of the earth again.

[*While master* MATHEW *reads*, BOBADILL *makes himself ready.*[7]

Mat. Indeed here are a number of fine speeches in this book. *O eyes, no eyes,*[8] *but fountains fraught with tears!* there's a conceit! *fountains fraught with tears! O life, no life, but lively form of death!* another.

Hiero. Justice, O justice to Hieronymo!
Loren. Back; seest thou not the king is busy?
Hiero. O, is he so!
King. Who is he that interrupts our business?
Hiero. Not I: Hieronymo beware, *go by, go by!*

[6] *Well penn'd! I would fain see all the poets of these times pen such another play as that* was.] Jonson has here contrived to pay an indirect compliment to himself; for, it appears from the MS. of Mr. Henslow, the proprietor of the Rose Theatre, that he had been employed on more than one occasion to improve old Jeronymo. The article, as copied by Mr. Malone, runs thus, "Lent unto Mr. Alleyn, the 25 of September, 1601, to lend unto Bengemen Johnson, upon his *writing of his adycions* in Jeronymo, xxxxs." In the following year, "Bengemen wrote more adycions;" and in *Cynthia's Revels*, 1602, has not forgotten to advert again to the circumstance.

[7] *Bobadill* makes himself ready.] This was the phrase then in use for *dressing* oneself: "I have seen little girls that yesterday had scarce a hand to *make them ready*, the next day weare wedding rings on their fingers." *Patient Grissill*, 1603. More instances of so common an expression are not required.

[8] *O eyes, no eyes, &c.*] These lines occur in the third act of the *Spanish Tragedy:* they are, it must be confessed, sufficiently ridiculous, and the poets of those days were never weary of parodying and burlesquing them: they are, however, in the taste of the times, and may be found, with some slight variations, in writers of higher name than the author of *Hieronymo.*

Digitized by Google

O world, no world, but mass of public wrongs! a third. *Confused and fill'd with murder and misdeeds!* a fourth. O, the muses! Is't not excellent? Is't not simply the best that ever you heard, captain? Ha! how do you like it?

Bob. 'Tis good.

Mat. *To thee, the purest object to my sense,*
The most refined essence heaven covers,
Send I these lines, wherein I do commence
The happy state of turtle-billing lovers.
If they prove rough, unpolish'd, harsh, and rude,
Haste made the waste: thus mildly, I conclude.

Bob. Nay, proceed, proceed. Where's this?

Mat. This, sir! a toy of mine own, in my nonage; the infancy of my muses: But when will you come and see my study? good faith, I can shew you some very good things I have done of late—That boot becomes your leg, passing well, captain, methinks.

Bob. So, so; it's the fashion gentlemen now use.[9]

Mat. Troth, captain, and now you speak of the fashion, master Wellbred's elder brother and I are fallen out exceedingly: This other day, I happened to enter into some discourse of a hanger,[1] which, I assure you, both for fashion and workmanship, was most peremptory beautiful, and gentleman-like: yet

[9] Bob. *So, so; it's the fashion gentlemen now use.*] Bobadill probably alludes to some particular form of the boot, which, in that capricious age, was continually varying its appearance. If, as Mr. Whalley supposes, he merely hints at the prevalence of the fashion, he is sufficiently modest, for not only "gentlemen," but "citizens, plowmen, and artisans of every description walked in their boots." *Old Plays*, vol. x. p. 118. The bon-mot of Gondemar, the Spanish ambassador, is well known. I shall amaze my countrymen, said he to James I. by letting them know, at my return, that all London is booted, and apparently ready to walk out of town!

[1] *I happened to enter into some discourse of a* hanger.] See *the Poetaster.*

Digitized by Google

he condemn'd, and cried it down for the most pied and ridiculous that ever he saw.

Bob. Squire Downright, the half-brother, was't not?

Mat. Ay, sir, he.

Bob. Hang him, rook! he! why he has no more judgment than a malt-horse: By St. George, I wonder you'd lose a thought upon such an animal; the most peremptory absurd clown of Christendom, this day, he is holden. I protest to you, as I am a gentleman and a soldier, I ne'er changed words with his like. By his discourse, he should eat nothing but hay: he was born for the manger, pannier, or pack-saddle. He has not so much as a good phrase in his belly, but all old iron, and rusty proverbs: a good commodity for some smith to make hob-nails of.

Mat. Ay, and he thinks to carry it away with his manhood still, where he comes: he brags he will give me the bastinado, as I hear.

Bob. How! he the bastinado! how came he by that word, trow?

Mat. Nay, indeed, he said, cudgel me; I term'd it so, for my more grace.

Bob. That may be; for I was sure it was none of his word: but when, when said he so?

Mat. Faith, yesterday, they say; a young gallant, a friend of mine, told me so.

Bob. By the foot of Pharaoh, and 'twere my case now, I should send him a chartel[2] presently. The bastinado! a most proper and sufficient dependance,[3]

[2] *I should send him a* chartel *presently.*] This word, which now means a paper of stipulations or conditions, anciently signified a *challenge*, and is used in that sense by all the writers of Jonson's age: "You had better," says Lord Roos, in his reply to the Marquis of Dorchester's challenge, "have been drunk, and set in the stocks for it, than sent the post with a whole packet of *chartels* for me."

[3] *A most proper and sufficient* dependance.] *Dependance*, in the

Digitized by Google

warranted by the great Caranza. Come hither, you shall chartel him; I'll shew you a trick or two, you shall kill him with, at pleasure; the first stoccata, if you will, by this air.

Mat. Indeed, you have absolute knowledge in the mystery, I have heard, sir.

Bob. Of whom, of whom have you heard it, I beseech you?

Mat. Troth, I have heard it spoken of divers, that you have very rare, and un-in-one-breath-utterable skill, sir.

Bob. By heaven, no, not I; no skill in the earth; some small rudiments in the science, as to know my time, distance, or so. I have profest it more for noblemen and gentlemen's use, than mine own practice, I assure you.—Hostess, accommodate us with another bed-staff here quickly. Lend us another bed-staff—the woman does not understand the words of action.[4]—Look you, sir: exalt not your point above this state, at any hand, and let your poniard maintain your defence, thus:—give it the gentleman, and leave us. [*Exit* TIB.] So, sir. Come on:

language of the *Duello*, then in vogue, meant the ground or cause of quarrel. It is explained more at large, as Whalley observes, in *the Devil's an Ass*, A. iii. and with some humour. The reader, who wishes for more on the subject, may refer to Massinger, vol. iii. p. 9. The great Caranza, to whom Bobadill appeals, is mentioned again in the *New Inn*, where he appears somewhat fallen from his dignity.

[4] *The woman does not understand the* words of action.] That *accommodate* was a *word of action*, appears from corporal Bardolph's exquisite dissertation on it: "Pardon me, sir, I have heard the "word. Phrase, call you it? By this day, I know not the phrase: "but I will maintain the word with my sword to be a *soldier-like* "*word*, and a word of exceeding good command." *2d Part of Hen. IV.* A. iii. S. 4.

Accommodation, as the poet tells us in his *Discoveries*, was at this time a modish expression, and what he calls, one of the perfumed terms of the age.

Digitized by Google

O, twine your body more about, that you may fall to a more sweet, comely, gentleman-like guard; so! indifferent: hollow your body more, sir, thus: now, stand fast o' your left leg, note your distance, keep your due proportion of time—oh, you disorder your point most irregularly.

Mat. How is the bearing of it now, sir?

Bob. O, out of measure ill: a well experienced hand would pass upon you at pleasure.

Mat. How mean you, sir, pass upon me?

Bob. Why, thus, sir,—make a thrust at me—[*master* MATHEW *pushes at* BOBADILL] come in upon the answer, controul your point, and make a full career at the body: The best practised gallants of the time name it the passado; a most desperate thrust, believe it.

Mat. Well, come, sir.

Bob. Why, you do not manage your weapon with any facility or grace to invite me. I have no spirit to play with you; your dearth of judgment renders you tedious.

Mat. But one venue,[5] sir.

Bob. Venue! fie; most gross denomination, as ever I heard: O, the stoccata, while you live, sir; note that.—Come, put on your cloke, and we'll go to some private place where you are acquainted, some tavern, or so—and have a bit—I'll send for one of

[5] *But one* venue, *sir.*] Few terms have had more unprofitable pains wasted on them than this, which Bobadill dispatches in an instant. It means, he says, the *stoccata;* and the stoccata is neither more nor less than the *thrust.* May we not hope, that the opinion of so competent a judge will be considered as decisive, and finally operate to the disburthenment of some of our ancient poets, who groan under the weight of discordant commentaries on this trivial word! The only circumstance worthy of notice here, is the preference which Bobadill manifests for the Italian. This was the prevailing fashion of the day; and is therefore judiciously attributed to him.

Digitized by Google

these fencers, and he shall breathe you, by my direction; and then I will teach you your trick: you shall kill him with it at the first, if you please. Why, I will learn you by the true judgment of the eye, hand, and foot, to control any enemy's point in the world. Should your adversary confront you with a pistol, 'twere nothing, by this hand! you should, by the same rule, control his bullet, in a line, except it were hail-shot, and spread. What money have you about you, master Mathew?

Mat. Faith, I have not past a two shillings, or so.

Bob. 'Tis somewhat with the least; but come; we will have a bunch of radish and salt to taste our wine, and a pipe of tobacco to close the orifice of the stomach; and then we'll call upon young Wellbred: perhaps we shall meet the Corydon[6] his brother there, and put him to the question.

[6] *The Corydon his brother.*] Meaning Downright, who was half-brother to Wellbred. WHAL.

The name of this unfortunate shepherd of Virgil seems to have suggested to our old writers a certain mixture of rusticity and folly. So, in the *Parson's Wedding*, "He has not so much as the family jest which these *Corydons* are to inherit." A. i. S. 3.

Digitized by Google

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The* Old Jewry. *A Hall in* KITELY'S *House.*

Enter KITELY, CASH, *and* DOWNRIGHT.

Kitely.

THOMAS, come hither.
There lies a note within upon my desk;
Here take my key: it is no matter neither.—
Where is the boy?

Cash. Within, sir, in the warehouse.

Kit. Let him tell over straight that Spanish gold,
And weigh it, with the pieces of eight. Do you
See the delivery of those silver-stuffs
To master Lucar: tell him, if he will,
He shall have the grograns, at the rate I told him,
And I will meet him on the Exchange anon.

Cash. Good, sir. [*Exit.*

Kit. Do you see that fellow, brother Downright?

Dow. Ay, what of him?

Kit. He is a jewel, brother.
I took him of a child up at my door,
And christen'd him, gave him mine own name, Thomas;
Since bred him at the Hospital;[7] where proving

[7] *Since bred him at the* Hospital,] i. e. at Christ's Hospital, whither, at its first establishment, the foundlings taken up in the city were sent for maintenance and education. In the *Widow*, by Jonson, Middleton, and Massinger, the same allusion occurs:

"—I have no child of mine own,
"But two I got once of a scowering woman,
"And they're both well provided for—in the *Hospital*."
A. ii. S. 1.

Digitized by Google

A toward imp, I call'd him home, and taught him
So much, as I have made him my cashier,
And giv'n him, who had none, a surname, Cash:
And find him in his place so full of faith,
That I durst trust my life into his hands.

Dow. So would not I in any bastard's, brother,
As it is like he is, although I knew
Myself his father. But you said you had somewhat
To tell me, gentle brother; what is't, what is't?

Kit. Faith, I am very loth to utter it,
As fearing it may hurt your patience:
But that I know your judgment is of strength,
Against the nearness of affection——

Dow. What need this circumstance? pray you, be direct.

Kit. I will not say how much I do ascribe
Unto your friendship, nor in what regard
I hold your love; but let my past behaviour,
And usage of your sister, [both][8] confirm
How well I have been affected to your——

Dow. You are too tedious; come to the matter, the matter.

Kit. Then, without further ceremony, thus.
My brother Wellbred, sir, I know not how,
Of late is much declined in what he was,
And greatly alter'd in his disposition.
When he came first to lodge here in my house,
Ne'er trust me if I were not proud of him:
Methought he bare himself in such a fashion,

[8] *And usage of your sister*, [both] *confirm.*] For *both*, the folio reads *but*, which appears to have been erroneously copied from the word in the preceding line. I am the more inclined to this opinion by the quarto, which gives the passage thus:

"——— let my continued zeal,
"The constant and religious regard
"That I have ever carried to your name,
"My carriage with your sister, *all* contest
"How much I stand affected to your house."

Digitized by Google

So full of man, and sweetness in his carriage,
And what was chief, it shew'd not borrow'd in him,
But all he did became him as his own,
And seem'd as perfect, proper, and possest,
As breath with life, or colour with the blood.
But now, his course is so irregular,
So loose, affected, and deprived of grace,
And he himself withal so far fallen off
From that first place, as scarce no note remains,
To tell men's judgments where he lately stood.
He's grown a stranger to all due respect,
Forgetful of his friends; and not content
To stale[9] himself in all societies,
He makes my house here common as a mart,—
A theatre, a public receptacle
For giddy humour, and diseased riot;
And here, as in a tavern or a stews,[1]
He and his wild associates spend their hours,
In repetition of lascivious jests,
Swear, leap, drink, dance, and revel night by night,
Control my servants; and, indeed, what not?

Dow. 'Sdeins, I know not what I should say to

[9] *To* stale *himself in all societies.*] To make himself cheap and common.—So the word is used by Shakspeare, and, indeed, by every writer of his age. By a very common oversight, it is printed *scale* in *Coriolanus*, which has happily furnished an occasion for much perverse ingenuity, to justify the poet's adoption of a word which he would steadily have rejected.

[1] *or* a stews,] This was the mode of expression then in use; so Withers,

"Turn his own house into *a* loathsome *stewes*."
Abuses stript and whipt, 1617.

And T. Heywood, very prettily,

" ——— At his departure
" Was it the old man's charge to have his windowes
" Glisten all night with starres? his modest house
" Turn'd to *a* common *stewes*? his beds to pallats
" Of lusts, and prostitutions?"
The English Traveller, A. i. S. 2.

Digitized by Google

him, in the whole world! He values me at a crack'd three-farthings, for aught I see.[2] It will never out of the flesh that's bred in the bone. I have told him enough, one would think, if that would serve; but counsel to him is as good as a shoulder of mutton to a sick horse. Well! he knows what to trust to, for George: let him spend, and spend, and domineer, till his heart ake; an he think to be relieved by me, when he is got into one o' your city pounds, the counters, he has the wrong sow by the ear, i' faith; and claps his dish at the wrong man's door:[3] I'll lay my hand on my halfpenny, ere I part with it to fetch him out, I'll assure him.

Kit. Nay, good brother, let it not trouble you thus.

Dow. 'Sdeath! he mads me; I could eat my very spur-leathers for anger! But, why are you so tame?

[2] *He values me at a crack'd* three-farthings, *for aught I see.*] The three-farthing pieces current in the reign of queen Elizabeth were made of silver; consequently very thin, and much crack'd by public use:

"———— My face so thin,
"That in mine ear I durst not stick a rose,
"Lest men should say, Look where three-farthings goes."
Shakspeare's *King John* A. i. S. 2. WHAL.

[3] *He has the wrong sow by the ear—and claps his dish at the wrong man's door:*] The reader is prepared for the language of Downright, by the previous observation of Bobadill, that "his discourse was nothing but old iron and *rusty proverbs*." In justice to Jonson, it should be observed that none of our dramatic poets equal him in the dexterity or frequency of these preparatory hints, which are scattered through all his plays, and evince a close and judicious study of the ancients. To *clap your dish at a wrong man's door*, is a proverb to be found in Ray: it alludes to the custom which prevailed in this country, two or three centuries ago, and, not improbably, even so late as Jonson's time, when diseased or infectious wretches wandered up and down with a *clap-dish*, a wooden vessel with a moveable cover, to give the charitable warning at once of their necessities and their infectious condition. To this mode of begging, our old writers frequently advert, and,

Digitized by Google

why do not you speak to him, and tell him how he disquiets your house?

Kit. O, there are divers reasons to dissuade me.
But, would yourself vouchsafe to travail in it,
(Though but with plain and easy circumstance,)
It would both come much better to his sense,
And savour less of stomach, or of passion.
You are his elder brother, and that title
Both gives and warrants your authority,
Which, by your presence seconded, must breed
A kind of duty in him, and regard:
Whereas, if I should intimate the least,
It would but add contempt to his neglect,
Heap worse on ill, make up a pile of hatred,

among the rest, Churchyard, in a passage of picturesque merit. It is Jane Shore who speaks,

"Where I was wont the golden chaines to wear,
"A payre of beads about my necke was wound,
"A linnen cloth was lapt about my heare;
"A ragged gowne that trailed on the ground,
"*A dish that clapt*, and gave a heavy sound,
"A staying staffe, and wallet therewithall,
"I bear about, as witnesse of my fall." *Challenge*, 143.

It was once also the practice for beadles and other inferior parish officers, to go from door to door with a clap-dish, soliciting charity for those unhappy sufferers who are now better relieved by voluntary subscriptions. Thus Matheo in the second part of the *Honest Whore*, "Must I be fed with chippings? you were best get a *clap-dish*, and say you are proctor to some spittle-house." As they naturally experienced many repulses, it may be that the text has some remote reference to this practice, as well as to the former.

In the *Caveat for Cursetors*, 1567, a variety of knavish impostors are described, and among them *fraters*: "These men," says the writer, "counterfeit proctors to spittle-houses. Some of them will carry black boxes at their gyrdel, wherein they have a brief of the Queen's Majesty's letters patentes geven to such a poore spittle-house for the relief of the poor there," &c.

This is, probably, a remnant of popery. Many of the religious communities of Italy have their *Questuanti* (their proctors) going about for alms, at this day, for particular saints, madonnas, &c.

Digitized by Google

That in the rearing would come tottering down,
And in the ruin bury all our love.
Nay, more than this, brother; if I should speak,
He would be ready, from his heat of humour,
And overflowing of the vapour in him,
To blow the ears of his familiars,
With the false breath of telling what disgraces,
And low disparagements, I had put upon him.
Whilst they, sir, to relieve him in the fable,
Make their loose comments upon every word,
Gesture, or look, I use; mock me all over,
From my flat cap unto my shining shoes;[4]
And, out of their impetuous rioting phant'sies,
Beget some slander that shall dwell with me.
And what would that be, think you? marry, this:
They would give out, because my wife is fair,
Myself but lately married, and my sister
Here sojourning a virgin in my house,
That I were jealous!—nay, as sure as death,
That they would say: and how that I had quarrell'd
My brother purposely, thereby to find

[4] ——————— *mock me all over,*
From my flat cap *unto my* shining shoes.] Howe says, that, in the times of Mary and Elizabeth, "apprentices wore *flat caps*, and others under three score years of age, as well journeymen as masters, both at home and abroad, whom the pages of the court, in derision, called *flat-caps*." The derision, however, was not confined to the pages of the court. Quicksilver says to his master, "Marry, pho! goodman *flat-cap*." And again, "Let's be no longer fools to this *flat-cap*, Touchstone." *Eastward Hoe.* But it is needless to multiply instances. *Shining shoes* occur frequently, and with the same contemptuous meaning; thus Shirley:

Capt. Will you to your shop again?
Cit. I have no mind to woollen stockings now,
And *shoes that shine.* *Doubtful Heir.*

And Massinger,

Bond. How shall we know the vintners?
Claud. If they walk on foot, by their rat-coloured stockings, and *shining shoes.* *Guardian.*

Digitized by Google

An apt pretext to banish them my house.

Dow. Mass, perhaps so: they're like enough to do it.

Kit. Brother, they would, believe it; so should I,
Like one of these penurious quack-salvers,
But set the bills up to mine own disgrace,
And try experiments upon myself;
Lend scorn and envy opportunity
To stab my reputation, and good name——

Enter master MATHEW *struggling with* BOBADILL.

Mat. I will speak to him.

Bob. Speak to him! away! By the foot of Pharaoh, you shall not! you shall not do him that grace. —The time of day to you, gentleman o' the house. Is master Wellbred stirring?

Dow. How then? what should he do?

Bob. Gentleman of the house, it is to you: is he within, sir?

Kit. He came not to his lodging to-night, sir, I assure you.

Dow. Why, do you hear? you!

Bob. The gentleman citizen hath satisfied me; I'll talk to no scavenger. [*Exeunt* BOB. *and* MAT.

Dow. How! scavenger! stay, sir, stay!

Kit. Nay, brother Downright.

Dow. 'Heart! stand you away, an you love me.

Kit. You shall not follow him now, I pray you, brother, good faith you shall not; I will over-rule you.

Dow. Ha! scavenger! well, go to, I say little: but, by this good day, (God forgive me I should swear,) if I put it up so, say I am the rankest cow that ever pist. 'Sdeins, an I swallow this, I'll ne'er draw my sword in the sight of Fleet-street again while I live; I'll sit in a barn with madge-howlet, and catch mice first. Scavenger! heart!—and I'll go near to fill that huge tumbrel-slop of yours with

Digitized by Google

somewhat, an I have good luck: your Garagantua breech cannot carry it away so.

Kit. Oh, do not fret yourself thus; never think on't.

Dow. These are my brother's consorts, these! these are his camerades, his walking mates! he's a gallant, a cavaliero too, right hangman cut! Let me not live, an I could not find in my heart to swinge the whole gang of 'em, one after another, and begin with him first. I am grieved it should be said he is my brother, and take these courses: Well, as he brews, so shall he drink, for George, again. Yet he shall hear on't, and that tightly too, an I live, i' faith.

Kit. But, brother, let your reprehension, then,
Run in an easy current, not o'er high
Carried with rashness, or devouring choler;
But rather use the soft persuading way,
Whose powers will work more gently, and compose
The imperfect thoughts you labour to reclaim;
More winning, than enforcing the consent.

Dow. Ay, ay, let me alone for that, I warrant you.

Kit. How now! [*Bell rings.*] Oh, the bell rings to breakfast. Brother, I pray you go in, and bear my wife company till I come; I'll but give order for some dispatch of business to my servants.

[*Exit* DOWNRIGHT.

Enter COB *with his tankard.*

Kit. What, Cob! our maids will have you by the back, i' faith, for coming so late this morning.

Cob. Perhaps so, sir; take heed somebody have not them by the belly, for walking so late in the evening. [*Exit.*

Kit. Well; yet my troubled spirit's somewhat eased,
Though not reposed in that security
As I could wish: but I must be content,
Howe'er I set a face on't to the world.
Would I had lost this finger at a venture,
So Wellbred had ne'er lodged within my house.

Digitized by Google

Why't cannot be, where there is such resort
Of wanton gallants, and young revellers,
That any woman should be honest long.
Is't like, that factious beauty will preserve
The public weal of chastity unshaken,
When such strong motives muster, and make head
Against her single peace? No, no: beware.
When mutual appetite doth meet to treat,
And spirits of one kind and quality
Come once to parley in the pride of blood,
It is no slow conspiracy that follows.
Well, to be plain, if I but thought the time
Had answer'd their affections, all the world
Should not persuade me but I were a cuckold.
Marry, I hope they have not got that start;
For opportunity hath baulk'd them yet,
And shall do still, while I have eyes and ears
To attend the impositions of my heart.
My presence shall be as an iron bar,
'Twixt the conspiring motions of desire:
Yea, every look or glance mine eye ejects,
Shall check occasion, as one doth his slave,
When he forgets the limits of prescription.

Enter dame KITELY *and* BRIDGET.

Dame K. Sister Bridget, pray you fetch down the rose-water above in the closet. [*Exit* BRIDGET.]—Sweet-heart, will you come in to breakfast?

Kit. An she have over-heard me now!—

Dame K. I pray thee, good muss,[5] we stay for you.

[5] Dame K. *I pray thee, good* muss.] *Muss* (mouse) was a familiar term of endearment between married people. Thus Shakspeare:

"Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his *mouse*." *Hamlet.*

And Warner:

"God bless thee, *mouse*, the bridegroom said."
Albion's Eng. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

Kit. By heaven, I would not for a thousand angels.

Dame K. What ail you, sweet-heart? are you not well? speak, good muss.

Kit. Troth my head akes extremely on a sudden.

Dame K. [*putting-her-hand-to his forehead.*] O, the lord!

Kit. How now! What?

Dame K. Alas, how it burns! Muss, keep you warm; good truth it is this new disease,[6] there's a number are troubled withal. For love's sake, sweet-heart, come in, out of the air.

Kit. How simple, and how subtle are her answers!
A new disease, and many troubled with it?
Why true; she heard me, all the world to nothing.

Dame K. I pray thee, good sweet-heart, come in; the air will do you harm, in troth.

Kit. The air! she has me in the wind.—Sweet-heart, I'll come to you presently; 'twill away, I hope.

Dame K. Pray heaven it do. [*Exit.*

Kit. A new disease! I know not, new or old,
But it may well be call'd poor mortals plague;
For, like a pestilence, it doth infect
The houses of the brain. First it begins
Solely to work upon the phantasy,
Filling her seat with such pestiferous air,
As soon corrupts the judgment; and from thence,
Sends like contagion to the memory:
Still each to other giving the infection,
Which as a subtle vapour spreads itself

[6] Dame K. *It is this* new disease.] Jonson is exact in his description. Violent pains in the head were the diagnostics of a disorder which made its first appearance about this time, and bore the appellation which the poet gives it. So the author of *Aulicus Coquinariæ, &c.* mentioning the illness of which prince Henry died; "Returned to Richmond in the fall of the leaf, he complained "afresh of his pain in the head, with increase of a meagre com-"plexion, inclining to feverish; and then for the rareness thereof "called the *new disease.*" WHAL.

Digitized by Google

Confusedly through every sensive part,
Till not a thought or motion in the mind
Be free from the black poison of suspect.
Ah! but what misery is it to know this?
Or, knowing it, to want the mind's erection
In such extremes? Well, I will once more strive,
In spite of this black cloud, myself to be,
And shake the fever off that thus shakes me. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. Moorfields.

Enter BRAINWORM *disguised like a maimed Soldier.*

Brainworm.

FOOLID, I cannot choose but laugh to see myself translated thus, from a poor creature to a creator; for now must I create an intolerable sort of lies, or my present profession loses the grace: and yet the lie, to a man of my coat, is as ominous a fruit as the fico.[7] O, sir, it holds for good polity ever, to

[7] ——— *as ominous a fruit as the* fico.] *Ominous* is used by Shakspeare and others for fatal or deadly; perhaps this is the sense of it here; and then Brainworm means, For a soldier to bear the imputation of lying is as fatal as the fico, or poisoned fig of Spain and Italy, to which our old dramatists are fond of alluding. Thus Shirley:

"———I could soon pay him with a *fig;*
"But that's not honest." *Court Secret.*

And Webster:

"I do now look for a *Spanish fig*, or an Italian sallad daily."
White Devil.

If this be not the sense, the expression refers to that particular mode of insult which is generally followed by blood in Italy, of thrusting out the thumb betwixt two fingers, and forming a coarse representation of a disease to which the name of ficus has always been given. This is the true import of the act, and I hope that what is here said on the disgusting subject will have a tendency to abridge the tedious disquisitions into which the mass of commen-

Digitized by Google

have that outwardly in vilest estimation, that inwardly is most dear to us: so much for my borrowed shape. Well, the troth is, my old master intends to follow my young master, dry-foot,[8] over Moorfields to London, this morning; now I knowing of this hunting-match, or rather conspiracy, and to insinuate with my young master, (for so must we that are blue waiters, and men of hope and service do, or perhaps we may wear motley at the year's end, and who wears motley,[9] you know,) have got me afore in this disguise, determining here to lie in ambuscado, and intercept him in the mid-way. If I can but get his cloke, his purse, his hat, nay, anything to cut him off, that is, to stay his journey, *Veni, vidi, vici*, I may say with captain Cæsar, I am made for ever, i' faith. Well, now must I practise to get the true garb of one of these lance-knights,[1] my arm here, and my— Odso! my young master, and his cousin, master

tators, with far more zeal than knowledge, are always too ready to enter.

[8] *To follow my young master*, dry-foot.] This is a term of the chase, and means, to follow the game by the scent of the foot. It occurs in Shakspeare, and in most of our old poets. "Nay, if he "*smell* nothing but papers, I care not for his *dry-foot* hunting." The *Dumb Knight*, 1608.

[9] ——— *and who wears motley*, you know.] Servants, here called *blue* waiters, because *blue* was the colour which they usually wore; and who in Jonson's time, were somewhat more under the control of their masters, than at present, were, by way of punishment for notorious faults, stripped of their liveries, and compelled to appear in a parti-coloured coat, the common habiliment of domestic fools. But *who knew this?* The audience, to whom Brainworm improperly addresses himself. This violation of decorum was not uncommon on our stage; but Jonson, probably, thought himself justified by the example of the ancients, who practise it without scruple. In a drama which owes so little to them, it is to be regretted that he should have introduced one of their principal incongruities.

[1] ——— *one of these* lance-knights,] i. e. common soldiers, men of the ranks. It is a Flemish term.

Digitized by Google

Stephen, as I am true counterfeit man of war, and no soldier!

Enter E. KNOWELL *and* STEPHEN.

E. Know. So, sir! and how then, coz?

Step. 'Sfoot! I have lost my purse, I think.

E. Know. How! lost your purse? where? when had you it?

Step. I cannot tell; stay.

Brai. 'Slid, I am afeard they will know me: would I could get by them!

E. Know. What, have you it?

Step. No; I think I was bewitched, I——. [*Cries.*

E. Know. Nay, do not weep the loss; hang it, let it go.

Step. Oh, it's here: No, an it had been lost, I had not cared, but for a jet ring mistress Mary sent me.

E. Know. A jet ring! O the poesie, the poesie?

Step. Fine, i'faith.—

Though Fancy sleep,
My love is deep.

Meaning, that though I did not fancy her, yet she loved me dearly.

E. Know. Most excellent!

Step. And then I sent her another, and my poesie was,

The deeper the sweeter,
I'll be judg'd by St. Peter.

E. Know. How, by St. Peter? I do not conceive that.

Step. Marry, St. Peter, to make up the metre.

E. Know. Well, there the saint was your good patron, he helped you at your need; thank him, thank him.

Brai. I cannot take leave on 'em so; I will venture, come what will. [*comes forward.*] Gentlemen, please you change a few crowns for a very excellent

Digitized by Google

good blade here? I am a poor gentleman, a soldier; one that, in the better state of my fortunes, scorned so mean a refuge; but now it is the humour of necessity to have it so. You seem to be gentlemen well affected to martial men, else I should rather die with silence, than live with shame: however, vouchsafe to remember it is my want speaks, not myself; this condition agrees not with my spirit—

E. Know. Where hast thou served?

Brai. May it please you, sir, in all the late wars of Bohemia, Hungary, Dalmatia, Poland,[2] where not, sir? I have been a poor servitor by sea and land any time this fourteen years, and followed the fortunes of the best commanders in Christendom. I was twice shot at the taking of Aleppo, once at the relief of Vienna; I have been at Marseilles, Naples, and the Adriatic gulph, a gentleman-slave in the gallies, thrice; where I was most dangerously shot in the head, through both the thighs; and yet, being thus maimed, I am void of maintenance, nothing left me but my scars, the noted marks of my resolution.

Step. How will you sell this rapier, friend?

Brai. Generous sir, I refer it to your own judgment; you are a gentleman, give me what you please.

Step. True, I am a gentleman, I know that, friend; but what though! I pray you say, what would you ask?

Brai. I assure you, the blade may become the side or thigh of the best prince in Europe.

E. Know. Ay, with a velvet scabbard, I think.

Step. Nay, an't be mine, it shall have a velvet

[2] In the French version of this play, we are told that this, and what follows, is an account of the campaigns really made by Jonson! It is a pity that the editors stopped here: a life of Jonson, on the authority of quarter-master Brainworm, would have been a great curiosity.

Digitized by Google

scabbard, coz, that's flat; I'd not wear it as it is, an you would give me an angel.

Brai. At your worship's pleasure, sir: nay, 'tis a most pure Toledo.

Step. I had rather it were a Spaniard.[3] But tell me, what shall I give you for it? An it had a silver hilt—

E. Know. Come, come, you shall not buy it; hold, there's a shilling, fellow; take thy rapier.

Step. Why, but I will buy it now, because you say so; and there's another shilling, fellow; I scorn to be out-bidden. What, shall I walk with a cudgel, like Higginbottom,[4] and may have a rapier for money!

E. Know. You may buy one in the city.

Step. Tut! I'll buy this i' the field, so I will; I have a mind to't, because 'tis a field rapier. Tell me your lowest price.

E. Know. You shall not buy it, I say.

Step. By this money, but I will, though I give more than 'tis worth.

[3] Step. *I had rather it were a* Spaniard.] Master Stephen had heard of the excellence of the Spanish blades, though his proficiency in geography did not enable him to discover in what country Toledo was situated. It is well known, that the swords manufactured in Castile were anciently much in request; they were said to owe their excellence to some peculiar quality of the water in which the metal was plunged, while glowing from the forge.

[4] *Shall I walk with a cudgel, like Higginbottom.*] I have no knowledge of this Higginbottom. It appears from the earl of Shrewsbury's Letters (see *Lodge's Illustrations*), that a country fellow of this name had been somewhat active in exciting disturbances among his lordship's tenants, and had been summoned more than once before the privy council, to answer the charge. But he was probably too early for master Stephen's acquaintance; unless the allusion be to some picture of him: this, however, is mere trifling. I find a kindred expression in *Eastward Hoe.* "Methinks I see "thee already walking in Moorfields, with a *cudgel under thine arm*, "borrowing and begging three pence." A. i. S. 1. Perhaps this was the *costume* of those sturdy vagrants, half footpads and half beggars, who then infested the outskirts of the metropolis.

Digitized by Google

E. Know. Come away, you are a fool.

Step. Friend, I am a fool, that's granted; but I'll have it, for that word's sake. Follow me for your money.

Brai. At your service, sir. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Another Part of* Moorfields.

Enter KNOWELL.

Knowell.

I CANNOT lose the thought[5] yet of this letter,
Sent to my son; nor leave t' admire the change
Of manners, and the breeding of our youth
Within the kingdom, since myself was one.—
When I was young,[6] he lived not in the stews
Durst have conceived a scorn, and utter'd it,
On a gray head; age was authority
Against a buffoon, and a man had then
A certain reverence paid unto his years,
That had none due unto his life: so much
The sanctity of some prevail'd for others.
But now we all are fallen; youth, from their fear,
And age, from that which bred it, good example.
Nay, would ourselves were not the first,[7] even parents,

[5] Know. *I cannot lose the thought*, &c.] This most admirable soliloquy is only found in the folio; the quarto gives us, instead of it, a tame, and rather uninteresting homily, in rhyme. Jonson has made somewhat free with the ancients, it must be confessed; yet the spirit, pathos, and moral dignity of the speech, are very impressive.

[6] *When I was young*, &c.] This is a beautiful allusion to the *Credebant hoc grande nefas* of Juvenal. In the Notes on that passage, the reader may find my early thoughts of Jonson: to offer him my more mature opinion would be only to repeat them.

[7] *Nay, would ourselves were not the first*, &c.] *Utinam liberorum*

Digitized by Google

That did destroy the hopes in our own children;
Or they not learn'd our vices in their cradles,
And suck'd in our ill customs with their milk!
Ere all their teeth be born, or they can speak,
We make their palates cunning; the first words
We form their tongues with, are licentious jests:
Can it call whore? cry bastard? O, then, kiss it!
A witty child! can't swear? the father's darling!
Give it two plums. Nay, rather than't shall learn
No bawdy song, the mother herself will teach it!—
But this is in the infancy, the days
Of the long coat; when it puts on the breeches,
It will put off all this. Ay, it is like,
When it is gone into the bone already!
No, no; this dye goes deeper than the coat,
Or shirt, or skin; it stains into the liver,
And heart, in some: and, rather than it should not,
Note what we fathers do! look how we live!
What mistresses we keep! at what expense,
In our sons' eyes! where they may handle our gifts,
Hear our lascivious courtships, see our dalliance,
Taste of the same provoking meats with us,
To ruin of our states! Nay, when our own
Portion is fled, to prey on their remainder,
We call them into fellowship of vice;
Bait 'em with the young chamber-maid, to seal,[8]

nostrorum mores non ipsi perderemus! Infantiam statim deliciis solvimus;—Quid non adultus concupiscet, qui in purpuris repit? Ante palatum eorum quam os instituimus. Gaudemus si quid licentius dixerint: verba, ne Alexandrinis quidem permittenda deliciis, risu et osculo excipimus; nec mirum: nos docuimus, ex nobis audierunt! Nostras amicas, nostros concubinos vident; omne convivium obscenis canticis strepit; pudenda dictu spectantur: fit ex his consuetudo, deinde natura. Quin. Inst. lib. i. c. 2.

[8] *Bait 'em with the young chambermaid, to seal.*] That is, tempt them by this means to give up under their hands a part of their future fortune, for the present enjoyment of the rest. WHAL.

Is it not rather to induce them to give up their right, and thus enable their profligate parents to dispose of the family estates?

Digitized by Google

And teach 'em all bad ways to buy affliction.[9]
This is one path: but there are millions more,
In which we spoil our own, with leading them.
Well, I thank heaven, I never yet was he
That travell'd with my son, before sixteen,
To shew him the Venetian courtezans;
Nor read the grammar of cheating I had made,
To my sharp boy, at twelve; repeating still
The rule, *Get money; still, get money, boy;*
No matter by what means; money will do
More, boy, than my lord's letter. Neither have I
Drest snails or mushrooms[1] curiously before him,
Perfumed my sauces, and taught him to make them;
Preceding still, with my gray gluttony,
At all the ordinaries, and only fear'd
His palate should degenerate, not his manners.
These are the trade of fathers now; however,
My son, I hope, hath met within my threshold
None of these household precedents, which are strong,
And swift, to rape youth to their precipice.
But let the house at home be ne'er so clean
Swept, or kept sweet from filth, nay dust and cobwebs,
If he will live abroad with his companions,
In dung and leystals,[2] it is worth a fear:

[9] *And teach 'em all bad ways to buy* affliction.] The first fol. 1616, by an evident misprint, reads *affiction*. Whalley unfortunately followed the second, 1640, or rather the booksellers' edition of 1716, which corrupted it into *affection*, and thus marred the sense of a very exquisite passage.

[1] ——— *Neither have I*
Drest snails or mushrooms, &c.]
Nec de se melius cuiquam sperare propinquo
Concedet juvenis, qui radere tubera terræ,
Boletum condire, et eodem jure natantes
Mergere ficedulas didicit, nebulone parente,
Et cană monstrante gulâ. Juv. Sat. xiv. WHAL.
Much of what follows is from the same satire. In the "*Grammar of cheating*" above, Horace was in the poet's thoughts.

[2] *Leystals,*] i.e. receptacles of filth: the word is still in use.

Digitized by Google

Nor is the danger of conversing less
Than all that I have mention'd of example.

Enter BRAINWORM, *disguised as before.*

Brai. My master! nay, faith, have at you; I am flesh'd now, I have sped so well. [*aside.*] Worshipful sir, I beseech you, respect the estate of a poor soldier; I am ashamed of this base course of life,—God's my comfort—but extremity provokes me to't: what remedy?

Kno. I have not for you, now.

Brai. By the faith I bear unto truth, gentleman, it is no ordinary custom in me, but only to preserve manhood. I protest to you, a man I have been; a man I may be, by your sweet bounty.

Kno. Pray thee, good friend, be satisfied.

Brai. Good sir, by that hand, you may do the part of a kind gentleman, in lending a poor soldier the price of two cans of beer, a matter of small value; the king of heaven shall pay you, and I shall rest thankful: Sweet worship.——

Kno. Nay, an you be so importunate——

Brai. Oh, tender sir! need will have its course: I was not made to this vile use. Well, the edge of the enemy could not have abated me so much: it's hard when a man hath served in his prince's cause, and be thus—[*weeps.*] Honourable worship, let me derive a small piece of silver from you, it shall not be given in the course of time.[3] By this good ground, I was fain to pawn my rapier last night for a poor supper; I had suck'd the hilts long before, I am a pagan else: Sweet honour.—

[3] *It shall not be given in the course of time.*] The meaning is, that in the course of time he should receive some recompense or other for his gift. It should not be given without any hope of return. WHAL.

Surely, it is an allusion (somewhat too free) to the text of scripture. "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord."

Digitized by Google

Kno. Believe me, I am taken with some wonder,
To think a fellow of thy outward presence,
Should, in the frame and fashion of his mind,
Be so degenerate, and sordid-base.
Art thou a man? and sham'st thou not to beg,
To practise such a servile kind of life?
Why, were thy education ne'er so mean,
Having thy limbs, a thousand fairer courses
Offer themselves to thy election.
Either the wars might still supply thy wants,
Or service of some virtuous gentleman,
Or honest labour; nay, what can I name,
But would become thee better than to beg:
But men of thy condition feed on sloth,
As doth the beetle on the dung she breeds in;
Not caring how the metal of your minds
Is eaten with the rust of idleness.
Now, afore me, whate'er he be, that should
Relieve a person of thy quality,
While thou insist'st in this loose desperate course,
I would esteem the sin not thine, but his.

Brai. Faith, sir, I would gladly find some other course, if so——

Kno. Ay,
You'd gladly find it, but you will not seek it.

Brai. Alas, sir, where should a man seek? in the wars, there's no ascent by desert in these days; but ——and for service, would it were as soon purchased, as wished for! the air's my comfort [*sighs.*] —I know what I would say.

Know. What's thy name?

Brai. Please you, Fitz-Sword, sir.

Know. Fitz-Sword!
Say that a man should entertain thee now,
Wouldst thou be honest, humble, just, and true?

Brai. Sir, by the place and honour of a soldier——

Know. Nay, nay, I like not these affected oaths;

Digitized by Google

Speak plainly, man, what think'st thou of my words?

Brai. Nothing, sir, but wish my fortunes were as happy as my service should be honest.

Know. Well, follow me, I'll prove thee, if thy deeds Will carry a proportion to thy words. [*Exit.*

Brai. Yes, sir, straight; I'll but garter my hose. —Oh that my belly were hoop'd now, for I am ready to burst with laughing! never was bottle or bagpipe fuller. 'Slid, was there ever seen a fox in years to betray himself thus! now shall I be possest of all his counsels; and, by that conduit, my young master. Well, he is resolved to prove my honesty; faith, and I'm resolved to prove his patience: Oh, I shall abuse him intolerably. This small piece of service will bring him clean out of love with the soldier for ever. He will never come within the sign of it, the sight of a cassock,[4] or a musket-rest again. He will hate the musters at Mile-end for it, to his dying day. It's no matter, let the world think me a bad counterfeit,[5] if I cannot give him the slip at an instant: why, this is better than to have staid his journey: well, I'll follow him. Oh, how I long to be employed! [*Exit.*

[4] *The sight of a* cassock *or* musket-rest *again.*] A *cassock*, as Whalley observes, "is a soldier's loose outward coat." With respect to the *rest*, it is so well described in the *Soldier's Accidence*, a book of undoubted authority, that nothing further need be required on the subject: "Lastly, for their right hands, they (the musqueteers) shall have *rests* of ashwood, or other tough wood, with iron pikes in the nether end, (to fix in the ground,) and half hoops of iron above, to *rest* the musquet on; and double strong stringes fastened neare thereunto, to hang about the arme of the soldier, when at any time he shall have occasion to trail the same." p. 4.

[5] *Let the world think me a bad* counterfeit, *if I cannot give him the* slip] *Counterfeit* and *slip* were synonymous, and both used indifferently for a piece of false money. Our old writers take advantage of this, to play upon the words, of which several instances will be found in the notes to the *Magnetic Lady*.

Digitized by Google

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The* Old Jewry. *A Room in the Windmill Tavern.*

Enter master MATHEW, WELLBRED, *and* BOBADILL.

Mathew.

YES faith, sir, we were at your lodging to seek you too.

Wel. Oh, I came not there to-night.

Bob. Your brother delivered us as much.

Wel. Who, my brother Downright?

Bob. He. Mr. Wellbred, I know not in what kind you hold me; but let me say to you this: as sure as honour, I esteem it so much out of the sunshine of reputation, to throw the least beam of regard upon such a——

Wel. Sir, I must hear no ill words of my brother.

Bob. I protest to you, as I have a thing to be saved about me, I never saw any gentleman-like part——

Wel. Good captain, faces about[6] to some other discourse.

[6] "Faces about" *to some other discourse.*] This simple expression, which occurs in almost every writer of the age, seems to have occasioned the commentators some trouble; for I find several elaborate notes upon it. It is merely a military phrase, equivalent to our *face* or *wheel*. In the *Soldier's Accidence*, the officers are directed to give the word of command in these terms, "used," says the author, "both here and in the Netherlands."

Faces to the right,
Faces to the left,
Faces about, or
Faces to the reare. } which is all one.

Digitized by Google

Bob. With your leave, sir, an there were no more men living upon the face of the earth, I should not fancy him, by St. George!

Mat. Troth, nor I; he is of a rustical cut, I know not how: he doth not carry himself like a gentleman of fashion.

Wel. Oh, master Mathew, that's a grace peculiar but to a few, *quos æquus amavit Jupiter.*

Mat. I understand you, sir.

Wel. No question, you do,—or you do not, sir.

Enter E. KNOWELL, *and master* STEPHEN.

Ned Knowell! by my soul, welcome; how dost thou, sweet spirit, my genius? 'Slid, I shall love Apollo and the mad Thespian girls the better, while I live, for this, my dear Fury; now, I see there's some love in thee. Sirrah, these be the two I writ to thee of: nay, what a drowsy humour is this now! why dost thou not speak?

E. Know. Oh, you are a fine gallant, you sent me a rare letter.

Wel. Why, was't not rare?

E. Know. Yes, I'll be sworn, I was ne'er guilty of reading the like; match it in all Pliny, or Symmachus' epistles, and I'll have my judgment burn'd in the ear for a rogue: make much of thy vein, for it is inimitable. But I marle what camel it was, that had the carriage of it; for, doubtless, he was no ordinary beast that brought it.

Wel. Why?

E. Know. Why, say'st thou! why dost thou think that any reasonable creature, especially in the morning, the sober time of the day too, could have mistaken my father for me?

Wel. 'Slid, you jest, I hope.

E. Know. Indeed, the best use we can turn it to, is to make a jest on't, now: but I'll assure you, my

Digitized by Google

father had the full view of your flourishing style, some hour before I saw it.

Wel. What a dull slave was this! but, sirrah, what said he to it, i'faith?

E. Know. Nay, I know not what he said; but I have a shrewd guess what he thought.

Wel. What, what?

E. Know. Marry, that thou art some strange, dissolute young fellow, and I—a grain or two better, for keeping thee company.

Wel. Tut! that thought is like the moon in her last quarter, 'twill change shortly: but, sirrah, I pray thee be acquainted with my two hang-by's here; thou wilt take exceeding pleasure in them, if thou hear'st 'em once go; my wind-instruments; I'll wind them up——but what strange piece of silence is this, the sign of the dumb man?

E. Know. Oh, sir, a kinsman of mine, one that may make your music the fuller, an he please; he has his humour, sir.

Wel. Oh, what is't, what is't?

E. Know. Nay, I'll neither do your judgment nor his folly that wrong, as to prepare your apprehension: I'll leave him to the mercy of your search; if you can take him, so!

Wel. Well, captain Bobadill, master Mathew, pray you know this gentleman here; he is a friend of mine, and one that will deserve your affection. I know not your name, sir, [to *Stephen.*] but I shall be glad of any occasion to render me more familiar to you.

Step. My name is master Stephen, sir; I am this gentleman's own cousin, sir, his father is mine uncle, sir: I am somewhat melancholy, but you shall command me, sir, in whatsoever is incident to a gentleman.

Bob. Sir, I must tell you this, I am no general

Digitized by Google

man; but for master Wellbred's sake, (you may embrace it at what height of favour you please,) I do communicate with you, and conceive you to be a gentleman of some parts; I love few words.

E. Kno. And I fewer, sir; I have scarce enough to thank you.

Mat. But are you indeed, sir, so given to it?

Step. Ay, truly, sir, I am mightily given to melancholy.

Mat. Oh, it's your only fine humour, sir; your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir.[7] I am melancholy myself, divers times, sir, and then do I no more but take pen and paper, presently, and overflow you half a score, or a dozen of sonnets at a sitting.

E. Know. Sure he utters them then by the gross. [*Aside.*

Step. Truly, sir, and I love such things out of measure.

E. Know. I'faith, better than in measure, I'll undertake.

Mat. Why, I pray you, sir, make use of my study, it's at your service.

[7] *Your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir.*] A sneer upon the fantastic behaviour of the gallants in that age, who affected to appear melancholy, and abstracted from common objects. The reason assigned, its being the physical cause of wit, which is as old as Aristotle himself, was likewise generally received by those who had no other pretence to genius. WHAL.

I suppose this is the passage to which Whalley alludes: Δια τι παντες, ὁσοι περιττοι γεγονασιν ανδρες, η κατα φιλοσοφιαν, η πολιτικην, η ποιησιν, η τεχνας, φαινονται μελαγχολικοι οντες. Prob. 30. 1.

Shakspeare seems to derive the fashion from France: he makes young Arthur say,

"I do remember when I was in France,
"Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,
"Only for wantonness." *King John.*

It is, however, of English growth: the French have been frequently mad, (both with joy and grief,) but never melancholy.

Digitized by Google

Step. I thank you, sir, I shall be bold, I warrant you; have you a stool there, to be melancholy upon?

Mat. That I have, sir, and some papers there of mine own doing, at idle hours, that you'll say there's some sparks of wit in 'em, when you see them.

Wel. Would the sparks would kindle once, and become a fire amongst them! I might see self-love burnt for her heresy. [*Aside.*

Step. Cousin, is it well? am I melancholy enough?

E. Kno. Oh ay, excellent.

Wel. Captain Bobadill, why muse you so?

E. Kno. He is melancholy too.

Bob. Faith, sir, I was thinking of a most honourable piece of service, was performed to-morrow, being St. Mark's day, shall be some ten years, now.

E. Kno. In what place, captain?

Bob. Why, at the beleaguering of Strigonium,[8] where, in less than two hours, seven hundred resolute gentlemen, as any were in Europe, lost their lives upon the breach. I'll tell you, gentlemen, it was the first, but the best leaguer that ever I beheld with these eyes, except the taking in of—[9] what do you call it? last year, by the Genoways; but that, of all other, was the most fatal and danger-

[8] *Strigonium,*] Graan in Hungary, which was retaken from the Turks in the year 1597, after having been in their possession near half a century. It should be observed, that the inroads which the Turks made into the Emperor's dominions, had made it fashionable to go a volunteering in his service; and we find that Thomas Lord Arundel of Wardour was created at this very time a count of the empire, as a reward of his signal valour; and because in forcing the water tower near Strigonium, he took a banner from the Turks with his own hand. WHAL.

[9] *Except the* taking in *of*—] To *take in* is to capture, to subdue. Thus Shakspeare:

"Is it not strange
"He should so quickly cut the Ionian sea,
"And *take in* Toryne?" *Anth. and Cleopatra.*

The quarto gives the name of the place to which Bobadill alludes, *Tortosa.*

Digitized by Google

ous exploit that ever I was ranged in, since I first bore arms before the face of the enemy, as I am a gentleman and a soldier!

Step. So! I had as lief as an angel I could swear as well as that gentleman.

E. Know. Then, you were a servitor at both, it seems; at Strigonium, and what do you call't?

Bob. O lord, sir! By St. George, I was the first man that entered the breach; and, had I not effected it with resolution, I had been slain if I had had a million of lives.

E. Know. 'Twas pity you had not ten; a cat's and your own, i'faith. But, was it possible?

Mat. Pray you mark this discourse, sir.

Step. So I do.

Bob. I assure you, upon my reputation, 'tis true, and yourself shall confess.

E. Know. You must bring me to the rack, first. [*Aside.*

Bob. Observe me judicially, sweet sir; they had planted me three demi-culverins just in the mouth of the breach; now, sir, as we were to give on, their master-gunner (a man of no mean skill and mark, you must think), confronts me with his linstock, ready to give fire; I, spying his intendment, discharged my petronel in his bosom, and with these single arms, my poor rapier, ran violently upon the Moors that guarded the ordnance, and put 'em pell-mell to the sword.

Wel. To the sword! To the rapier, captain.

E. Know. Oh, it was a good figure observed, sir: but did you all this, captain, without hurting your blade?

Bob. Without any impeach o' the earth: you shall perceive, sir. [*shews his rapier.*] It is the most fortunate weapon that ever rid on poor gentleman's thigh. Shall I tell you, sir? You talk of Morglay,

Digitized by Google

Excalibur, Durindana, or so;[1] tut! I lend no credit to that is fabled of 'em: I know the virtue of mine own, and therefore I dare the boldlier maintain it.

Step. I marle whether it be a Toledo or no.

Bob. A most perfect Toledo, I assure you, sir.

Step. I have a countryman of his here.

Mat. Pray you, let's see, sir; yes, faith, it is.

Bob. This a Toledo! Pish!

Step. Why do you pish, captain?

Bob. A Fleming, by heaven! I'll buy them for a guilder apiece, an I would have a thousand of them.

E. Know. How say you, cousin? I told you thus much.

Wel. Where bought you it, master Stephen?

Step. Of a scurvy rogue soldier: a hundred of lice go with him! He swore it was a Toledo.

Bob. A poor provant rapier, no better.[2]

Mat. Mass, I think it be indeed, now I look on't better.

E. Know. Nay, the longer you look on't, the worse. Put it up, put it up.

Step. Well, I will put it up; but by—I have for-

[1] *You talk of Morglay, Excalibur, Durindana, or so.*] These blades make a figure in romance: *Morglay* was the sword of Bevis of Southampton; *Durindana* of Orlando, and *Excalibur* of the renowned king Arthur. Mr. Congreve, who was a great admirer and imitator of Jonson, has formed the character of Bluff, in the *Old Batchelor*, upon this of Bobadill, as will easily appear by comparing them together. WHAL.

I do not think so: but of this elsewhere.

[2] *A poor* provant *rapier, no better.*] Properly speaking, *provant* means provisions; but it is here, and indeed, in many other places, extended to arms, ammunition, &c. A *provant* rapier, therefore, is such a one as the common men wore; such in short, as was supplied to the soldiers from the magazines of the army. Thus Massinger:

"A knave with half a breech there; if you bear not
"Yourselves both in and upright, with a *provant* sword,
"Will slash your scarlets." *Maid of Honour.*

Digitized by Google

got the captain's oath, I thought to have sworn by it —an e'er I meet him——

Wel. O, it is past help now, sir, you must have patience.

Step. Whoreson, coney-catching rascal![3] I could eat the very hilts for anger.

E. Know. A sign of good digestion; you have an ostrich stomach, cousin.

Step. A stomach! would I had him here, you should see an I had a stomach.

Wel. It's better as it is.—Come, gentlemen, shall we go?

Enter BRAINWORM, *disguised as before.*

E. Know. A miracle, cousin; look here, look here!

Step. Oh —od's lid! By your leave, do you know me, sir?

Brai. Ay, sir, I know you by sight.

Step. You sold me a rapier, did you not?

Brai. Yes, marry did I, sir.

Step. You said it was a Toledo, ha?

Brai. True, I did so.

Step. But it is none.

Brai. No, sir, I confess it; it is none.

Step. Do you confess it? Gentlemen, bear witness, he has confest it:—Od's will, an you had not confest it——

E. Know. Oh, cousin, forbear, forbear!

Step. Nay, I have done, cousin.

Wel. Why, you have done like a gentleman; he has confest it, what would you more?

[3] *Whoreson* coney-catching *rascal!*] As this opprobrious term frequently occurs in our old writers, it may not be amiss, once for all, to give its meaning: "A *conie-catcher*, a name given to *deceivers*, by a metaphor taken from those that rob warrens, and "conie grounds, using all means, sleights, and cunning to deceive "them, as pitching of haies before their holes, fetching them in by "tumblers, &c." *Minsh. Dict.* 1617.

Digitized by Google

Step. Yet, by his leave, he is a rascal, under his favour, do you see.

E. Know. Ay, by his leave, he is, and under favour: a pretty piece of civility! Sirrah, how dost thou like him?

Wel. Oh it's a most precious fool, make much on him: I can compare him to nothing more happily, than a drum; for every one may play upon him.

E. Know. No, no, a child's whistle were far the fitter.

Brai. Sir, shall I intreat a word with you?

E. Know. With me, sir? you have not another Toledo to sell, have you?

Brai. You are conceited, sir;[4] Your name is master Knowell, as I take it?

E. Know. You are in the right; you mean not to proceed in the catechism, do you?

Brai. No, sir, I am none of that coat.

E. Know. Of as bare a coat, though: well, say sir.

Brai. [*taking E. Know. aside.*] Faith, sir, I am but servant to the drum extraordinary, and indeed, this smoky varnish being washed off, and three or four patches removed, I appear your worship's in reversion, after the decease of your good father, Brainworm.

E. Know. Brainworm! 'Slight, what breath of a conjurer hath blown thee hither in this shape?

Brai. The breath of your letter, sir, this morning; the same that blew you to the Windmill, and your father after you.

E. Know. My father!

Brai. Nay, never start, 'tis true; he has followed you over the fields by the foot, as you would do a hare in the snow.

[4] *You are* conceited, *sir.*] Witty, disposed to jest; or, as the quarto has it, *pleasant.* In this sense the word occurs in *Sejanus.* "Your lordship is *conceited.*" A. i.

Digitized by Google

E. Know. Sirrah Wellbred, what shall we do, sirrah? my father is come over after me.

Wel. Thy father! Where is he?

Brai. At justice Clement's house, in Coleman-street, where he but stays my return; and then—

Wel. Who's this? Brainworm!

Brai. The same, sir.

Wel. Why how, in the name of wit, com'st thou transmuted thus?

Brai. Faith, a device, a device; nay, for the love of reason, gentlemen, and avoiding the danger, stand not here; withdraw, and I'll tell you all.

Wel. But art thou sure he will stay thy return?

Brai. Do I live, sir? what a question is that!

Wel. We'll prorogue his expectation, then, a little: Brainworm, thou shalt go with us.—Come on, gentlemen.—Nay, I pray thee, sweet Ned, droop not: 'heart, an our wits be so wretchedly dull, that one old plodding brain can outstrip us all, would we were e'en prest to make porters of, and serve out the remnant of our days in Thames-street, or at Custom-house key, in a civil war against the carmen!

Brai. Amen, amen, amen, say I. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The* Old Jewry. KITELY'S *Warehouse.*

Enter KITELY *and* CASH.

Kitely.

WHAT says he, Thomas? did you speak with him?

Cash. He will expect you, sir, within this half hour.

Kit. Has he the money ready, can you tell?

Cash. Yes, sir, the money was brought in last night.

Digitized by Google

Kit. O, that is well; fetch me my cloak, my cloak! — [*Exit* CASH.
Stay, let me see, an hour to go and come;
Ay, that will be the least; and then 'twill be
An hour before I can dispatch with him,
Or very near; well, I will say two hours.
Two hours! ha! things never dreamt of yet,
May be contrived, ay, and effected too,
In two hours absence; well, I will not go.
Two hours! No, fleering Opportunity,
I will not give your subtilty that scope.
Who will not judge him worthy to be robb'd,
That sets his doors wide open to a thief,
And shews the felon where his treasure lies?
Again, what earthy spirit but will attempt
To taste the fruit of beauty's golden tree,
When leaden sleep seals up the dragon's eyes?
I will not go. Business, *go by* for once.
No, beauty, no; you are of too good caract,[5]
To be left so, without a guard, or open.
Your lustre, too, 'll inflame at any distance,
Draw courtship to you, as a jet doth straws;
Put motion in a stone, strike fire from ice,
Nay, make a porter leap you with his burden.
You must be then kept up, close, and well watch'd,
For, give you opportunity, no quick-sand
Devours or swallows swifter! He that lends
His wife, if she be fair, or time or place,
Compels her to be false. I will not go;
The dangers are too many :—and then the dressing
Is a most main attractive! Our great heads,

[5] *No, beauty, no; you are of too good* caract, &c.] That is, you are of too intrinsic a value to be left thus exposed and public, without any to preserve and guard you. The metaphor is taken from the finest gold, which hath the least mixture of alloy in it; or from the value of pearls, which are most precious when they contain more caracts in weight. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

Within this city, never were in safety,
Since our wives wore these little caps:[6] I'll change 'em;
I'll change 'em straight in mine: mine shall no more
Wear three-piled acorns,[7] to make my horns ake.
Nor will I go; I am resolved for that.

Re-enter CASH *with a cloak.*

Carry in my cloak again. Yet stay. Yet do, too:
I will defer going, on all occasions.

Cash. Sir, Snare, your scrivener, will be there with the bonds.

Kit. That's true: fool on me! I had clean forgot it;
I must go. What's a clock?

Cash. Exchange-time, sir.[8]

[6] ——— *Our great heads,*
Within this city, never were in safety,
Since our wives wore these little *caps.*] Velvet caps, of a diminutive size, were worn at this time by citizen's wives and daughters: the fashion indeed must have prevailed for some years, for it is mentioned in the comedy of *Taming the Shrew*, which Shakspeare afterwards remodelled. The writer of the old play merely notices it; but Shakspeare wantons on the subject:

Pet. Why this was moulded on a porringer;
A velvet dish;—fie, fie! 'tis lewd and filthy!
Why, 'tis a cockle, or a walnut shell,
A knack, a toy, a trick, a baby's cap;
Away with it! come, let me have a bigger.
Kath. I'll have no bigger; this doth fit the time,
And gentlewomen *wear such caps as these.*

Three-piled, which occurs in the next line, means velvet of the strongest and richest quality. The expression is very common.

[7] ——— *mine shall no more*
Wear three-piled acorns, *to make my* horns ake.] This is about the worst pun that was ever produced, and would scarcely pass muster in the columns of a modern newspaper. Jonson is nearly as fond of a pun as Shakspeare is of a quibble.

[8] *Cash.* Exchange-time, *sir.*] The merchants of these days may not, perhaps, be without curiosity to know at what hour their ancestors met for the dispatch of business. It appears, from the quarto, to have been at "ten o'clock."

Digitized by Google

Kit. 'Heart, then will Wellbred presently be here too,
With one or other of his loose consorts.
I am a knave, if I know what to say,
What course to take, or which way to resolve.
My brain, methinks, is like an hour-glass,
Wherein my imaginations run like sands,
Filling up time;[9] but then are turn'd and turn'd:
So that I know not what to stay upon,
And less, to put in act.—It shall be so.
Nay, I dare build upon his secrecy,
He knows not to deceive me.—Thomas!

Cash. Sir.

Kit. Yet now I have bethought me too, I will not.—
Thomas, is Cob within?

Cash. I think he be, sir.

Kit. But he'll prate too, there is no speech of him.
No, there were no man on the earth to Thomas,[1]
If I durst trust him; there is all the doubt.
But should he have a chink in him, I were gone,
Lost in my fame for ever, talk for th' Exchange!
The manner he hath stood with, till this present,
Doth promise no such change; what should I fear then?
Well, come what will, I'll tempt my fortune once.
Thomas—you may deceive me, but, I hope—
Your love to me is more——

[9] *Wherein my imaginations run like sands,*
Filling up time.] These lines run smoother and better in the quarto:

And my imaginations, like the sands,
Run dribbling forth to fill the mouth of time.

[1] *No, there was* no *man on the earth* to *Thomas.*] None to be *compared* to him. So in the *Return from Parnassus:* "Well, let "others complain, but I think there is *no* felicity *to* the serving of "a fool." And in the *Jew of Malta:*

"There is *no* musick *to* a Christian's knell." WHAL.

Digitized by Google

Cash. Sir, if a servant's
Duty, with faith, may be call'd love, you are
More than in hope, you are possess'd of it.
Kit. I thank you heartily, Thomas : give me your hand :
With all my heart, good Thomas. I have, Thomas,
A secret to impart unto you—but,
When once you have it, I must seal your lips up ;
So far I tell you, Thomas.
Cash. Sir, for that—
Kit. Nay, hear me out. Think I esteem you, Thomas,
When I will let you in thus to my private.
It is a thing sits nearer to my crest,
Than thou art 'ware of, Thomas ; if thou should'st
Reveal it, but——
Cash. How ! I reveal it ?
Kit. Nay,
I do not think thou would'st ; but if thou should'st,
'Twere a great weakness.
Cash. A great treachery :
Give it no other name.
Kit. Thou wilt not do't, then ?
Cash. Sir, if I do, mankind disclaim me ever !
Kit. He will not swear, he has some reservation,
Some conceal'd purpose, and close meaning sure ;
Else, being urg'd so much, how should he choose
But lend an oath to all this protestation ?
He's no precisian, that I'm certain of,
Nor rigid Roman Catholic : he'll play
At fayles, and tick-tack ; I have heard him swear.[2]
What should I think of it ? urge him again,
And by some other way ! I will do so.

[2] *At* fayles, *and* tick-tack ; *I have heard him swear.*] From these instances, he concludes that Cash is no precisian, or, as the quarto has it, Puritan ; as from some others, he is convinced that he is no Roman Catholic. The Puritans were at this time re-

Digitized by Google

Well, Thomas, thou hast sworn not to disclose :—
Yes, you did swear ?

markable for scrupulously abstaining from diversions, and from affirmations of every kind in their common discourse. WHAL.

Tick-tack is a complicated species of back-gammon. It is played both with men and pegs, which renders it somewhat difficult, as two kinds of calculation are carried on at the same time. It is not much in use with us, but is found every where on the Continent: when Jonson wrote, however, the game was sufficiently common here, and rules for playing it are to be found in the *Complete Gamester*, and other vademecums of the time. I have suppressed Whalley's note on the subject, as it was evidently written at random—"a malady most incident to" the editors of our old dramatists. In *Taming the Shrew*, Tranio boasts that he had "faced his antagonist with a *card of ten*." i. e. says Warburton, "with the highest card in the *simple* games of our ancestors." But the "*simple* games of our ancestors" were far more intricate and involved than the most complicated ones of the present day. To understand Gleek alone, as they played it, would employ all the time, and more than all the wits of a dozen modern professors. In a word, most of their games were very difficult, and only to be mastered by hard study. Gambling was then a science; and a young man could not well be ruined by it, without an attempt, at least, to exercise his faculties: it is now simplified; and so dexterously "adapted to the meanest capacity," that the veriest blockhead in the kingdom may get rid of a fortune, to any amount, with a promptitude altogether surprising.

Warburton's note, which is thus palpably false, and which would explain nothing, if it were true, keeps its place, however, in all the editions of our great poet: not less to the credit of his commentators, than to the edification of his readers.

Of *fayles* I know nothing. It does not occur in the quarto, nor have I found it any where else. The word which comes nearest to it is *fayalle*, "a kind of counter, used, as the *Dict. de Trevoux* says, to cast up money in Japan: if this (which I much doubt) be the origin of the term, *fayles* may be some game of chance in which these pieces are employed. In Jonson's days a great number of petty curiosities were brought into this country from the Japanese islands, and fayalles might be among them.

I had written thus far, when I received the following explanation of *fayles* from Francis Douce, Esq. of the British Museum.

"It is a very old table game, and one of the numerous varieties "of back-gammon that were formerly used in this country. It "was played with three dice and the usual number of men or

Digitized by Google

Cash. Not yet, sir, but I will,
Please you ——
Kit. No, Thomas, I dare take thy word,
But, if thou wilt swear, do as thou think'st good;
I am resolv'd without it;[3] at thy pleasure.
Cash. By my soul's safety then, sir, I protest,
My tongue shall ne'er take knowledge of a word
Deliver'd me in nature of your trust.
Kit. It is too much; these ceremonies need not:
I know thy faith to be as firm as rock.
Thomas, come hither, near; we cannot be
Too private in this business. So it is,
—Now he has sworn, I dare the safelier venture.
[*Aside.*
I have of late, by divers observations——
But whether his oath can bind him, yea, or no,
Being not taken lawfully?[4] ha! say you?

" pieces. The peculiarity of the game depended on the mode of " first placing the men on the points. If one of the players " threw some particular throw of the dice he was disabled from " bearing off any of his men, and therefore *fayled* in winning the " game, and hence the appellation of it. The above particulars " are gathered from a manuscript in the Royal Collection, con- " taining, among other things, some account of the table-games " made use of in the 14th century. In the English translation of " Rabelais, by sir Thomas Urquhart, the *failie* is mentioned among " Gargantua's games. The original is *barignin*, which the Dutch " editor calls, " a sort of tric-trac."

I ought, perhaps, in consequence of this account, which is perfectly satisfactory, to have suppressed my own wanderings on the subject: but I feel no shame in avowing my ignorance, especially as Mr. Douce supports me in thinking that the term is nearly an απαξ λεγομενον. Perhaps, I have had the good fortune to apply to the only person who could furnish me with any information on this long forgotten game.

[3] *I am* resolved *without it,*] i. e. convinced. See p. 33.

[4] *But whether his oath can bind him, yea or no,*
Being not taken lawfully.] The character of Kitely is extremely well imagined, and supported with great propriety. His jealousy is constantly returning, and creates him fresh scruples in every thing he sets about. It was a question in casuistry, whether an

Digitized by Google

I will ask council ere I do proceed :— [*Aside.*
Thomas, it will be now too long to stay,
I'll spy some fitter time soon, or to-morrow.
Cash. Sir, at your pleasure.
Kit. I will think :—and, Thomas,
I pray you search the books 'gainst my return,
For the receipts 'twixt me and Traps.
Cash. I will, sir.
Kit. And hear you, if your mistress's brother, Wellbred,
Chance to bring hither any gentleman,
Ere I come back, let one straight bring me word.
Cash. Very well, sir.
Kit. To the Exchange, do you hear?
Or here in Coleman-street, to justice Clement's.
Forget it not, nor be not out of the way.
Cash. I will not, sir.
Kit. I pray you have a care on't.
Or, whether he come or no, if any other,
Stranger, or else; fail not to send me word.
Cash. I shall not, sir.
Kit. Be it your special business
Now to remember it.
Cash. Sir, I warrant you.
Kit. But, Thomas, this is not the secret, Thomas,
I told you of.
Cash. No, sir; I do suppose it.
Kit. Believe me, it is not.
Cash. Sir, I do believe you.

oath was of any force, unless taken in form before a legal magistrate: the poet therefore brings this to his imagination, to fill him with groundless objections, and throw him into the greater perplexity. WHAL.

Whalley's observation, which is very pertinent, is confirmed by Shakspeare.

> An oath is of no moment, being not took
> Before a true and lawful magistrate.
> *Hen. VI.* 3d. part, A. i. S. 2.

Digitized by Google

Kit. By heaven it is not, that's enough: but, Thomas,
I would not you should utter it, do you see,
To any creature living; yet I care not.
Well, I must hence. Thomas, conceive thus much;
It was a trial of you, when I meant
So deep a secret to you, I mean not this,
But that I have to tell you; this is nothing, this.
But, Thomas, keep this from my wife, I charge you,
Lock'd up in silence, midnight, buried here.—
No greater hell than to be slave to fear.[5] [*Exit.*

Cash. *Lock'd up in silence, midnight, buried here!*
Whence should this flood of passion, trow, take head? ha!
Best dream no longer of this running humour,
For fear I sink; the violence of the stream
Already hath transported me so far,
That I can feel no ground at all: but soft,
Oh, 'tis our water-bearer: somewhat has crost him now.

Enter COB *hastily.*

Cob. Fasting-days! what tell you me of fasting days? 'Slid, would they were all on a light fire for me! they say the whole world shall be consumed with fire one day, but would I had these Ember-weeks and villanous Fridays burnt in the mean time, and then——

[5] This is a masterly scene. Jonson had in view, perhaps, a more masterly one, between Hubert and king John; and I trust that the eternal detractors of his character as well as talents, will not attribute to envy of Shakspeare's success, an honourable effort to emulate him in his high career. "The field of glory is a field for all;" fair contention is the fruitful source of excellence, and though Jonson must be confessed to be outstripped in the race, yet, let it be remembered to his honour, that it is only by Shakspeare, to whom he approaches much nearer than any third competitor ever approached to himself.

Digitized by Google

Cash. Why, how now Cob? what moves thee to this choler, ha?

Cob. Collar, master Thomas! I scorn your collar, I, sir; I am none o' your cart-horse, though I carry and draw water. An you offer to ride me with your collar or halter either, I may hap shew you a jade's trick, sir.

Cash. O, you'll slip your head out of the collar? why, goodman Cob, you mistake me.

Cob. Nay, I have my rheum, and I can be angry as well as another, sir.

Cash. Thy rheum, Cob! thy humour, thy humour —thou mistak'st.[6]

Cob. Humour! mack, I think it be so indeed; what is that humour?[7] some rare thing, I warrant.

Cash. Marry I'll tell thee, Cob: it is a gentleman-like monster, bred in the special gallantry of our time, by affectation; and fed by folly.

Cob. How! must it be fed?

Cash. Oh ay, humour is nothing if it be not fed: didst thou never hear that? it's a common phrase, *feed my humour.*

Cob. I'll none on it: humour, avaunt! I know you not, be gone! let who will make hungry meals for your monstership, it shall not be I. Feed you,

[6] Cash. *Thy* rheum, *Cob! thy humour—thou mistak'st.*] Not much, however, for *rheum*, also, appears to have been a cant term for spleen, caprice, or fretful resentment. Thus Daniel, in the *Queen's Arcadia*, A. iii. S. 1.

> But now, in faith, I have found out a trick,
> That will perpetually so feed their *rheums*—

Cob's misfortune seems to be, that he came, like "Justice Shallow," in the rear-ward of the fashion, and was not aware that his term had been recently superseded.

[7] *What is that* humour?] Every oddity which a man affected was called his humour, a word that seems to have been first used in this sense, about the age of Jonson. But we shall have occasion to say more of this, in the notes on the first act of *Every man out of his Humour.* WHAL.

Digitized by Google

quoth he! 'slid, I have much ado to feed myself; especially on these lean rascally days too; an't had been any other day but a fasting-day—a plague on them all for me! By this light, one might have done the commonwealth good service, and have drown'd them all in the flood, two or three hundred thousand years ago. O, I do stomach them hugely. I have a maw now, an 'twere for sir Bevis his horse, against them.[8]

Cash. I pray thee, good Cob, what makes thee so out of love with fasting-days?

Cob. Marry, that which will make any man out of love with 'em, I think; their bad conditions, an you will needs know. First, they are of a Flemish breed, I am sure on't, for they raven up more butter than all the days of the week beside; next, they stink of fish and leek-porridge miserably; thirdly, they'll keep a man devoutly hungry all day, and at night send him supperless to bed.

Cash. Indeed these are faults, Cob.

Cob. Nay, an this were all, 'twere something; but they are the only known enemies to my generation. A fasting-day no sooner comes, but my lineage goes to wrack; poor cobs! they smoak for it, they are made martyrs o' the gridiron, they melt in passion: and your maids too know this, and yet would have me turn Hannibal, and eat my own flesh and blood. My princely coz, [*pulls out a red herring.*] fear nothing; I have not the heart to devour you, an I

[8] *I have a maw now, an 'twere for sir Bevis his horse, against them.*] This horse, the gift of the fair Josyan, and little less celebrated than sir Bevis himself, was named Arundel. He appears to have been of a most pugnacious disposition, and is described, in the old romance, as rendering his master very effectual assistance in battle, biting, kicking, and dispersing his enemies on every side. It is to this particular trait in his character, I suppose, that Cob alludes, by way of illustrating the fierceness of his hostility to fasting-days.

Digitized by Google

might be made as rich as King Cophetua.[9] O that I had room for my tears, I could weep salt-water enough now to preserve the lives of ten thousand thousand of my kin! But I may curse none but these filthy almanacks; for an't were not for them, these days of persecution would never be known. I'll be hang'd an some fishmonger's son do not make of 'em,[1] and puts in more fasting-days than he should do, because he would utter his father's dried stock-fish and stinking conger.

Cash. 'Slight peace! thou'lt be beaten like a stock-fish else: here's master Mathew.

Enter WELLBRED, E. KNOWELL, BRAINWORM, MATHEW, BOBADILL, *and* STEPHEN.

Now must I look out for a messenger to my master. [*Exit with Cob.*

Wel. Beshrew me, but it was an absolute good jest, and exceedingly well carried!

E. Know. Ay, and our ignorance maintain'd it as well, did it not?

Wel. Yes, faith; but was it possible thou shouldst not know him? I forgive master Stephen, for he is stupidity itself.

E. Know. 'Fore God, not I, an' I might have been join'd patten with one of the seven wise masters for knowing him. He had so writhen himself into the habit of one of your poor in-

[9] *an I might be made as rich as king Cophetua.*] King Cophetua is better known for his marriage with "a beggar maid," than for his riches: but kings, in the opinion of the Cobs of every age, are always rich.

[1] *I'll be hang'd an some fishmonger's son do not make of 'em.*] For the support and encouragement of the fishing towns in the time of queen Elizabeth, Wednesdays and Fridays were constantly observed as fast-days, or days of abstinence from flesh. This was by the advice of her minister Cecil; and by the vulgar it was generally called Cecil's fast. See WARBURTON's note on *King Lear*, Act i. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

fantry, your decayed, ruinous, worm-eaten gentlemen of the round;[2] such as have vowed to sit on the skirts of the city, let your provost and his half-dozen of halberdiers do what they can; and have translated begging out of the old hackney-pace to a fine easy amble, and made it run as smooth off the tongue as a shove-groat shilling.[3] Into the likeness of one of these reformados[4] had

[2] *Your decayed, ruinous, worm-eaten* gentlemen of the round.] Invalids, or disbanded men, who, to procure themselves a livelihood, had taken up the trade of begging. A *gentleman of the round* was a soldier of inferior rank, but in a station above that of a common man. This appears from a pamphlet published in that age, in which the several military degrees are thus enumerated: "The general, high marshall with his provosts, serjeant-general, "serjeant of a regiment, corownel, captayne, lieutenant, auncient, "serjeant of a company, corporall, gentleman in a company or "of the rounde, launce-passado. These, says the author, are "special; the other that remain, private or common soldiers." *The Castle or Picture of Policy*, &c. 1581. The duty of these gentlemen was, to visit the centinels, watches, and advanced guards; and from their office of going their rounds, they derive their name. WHAL.

[3] *A shove-groat shilling.*] This expression occurs in Shakspeare; "Quoit him down, Bardolph, like a shove-groat shilling." The thing meant, I suppose, is the piece of metal or money, as they term it, made use of in the play of shovel-board. WHAL.

Edw. VI.'s shillings were generally employed for this purpose; this appears from Taylor's *Travels of Twelve-pence*,

> For why, with me the unthrifts every day,
> With my face downward, do at shove-board play.

And also from the valuables of which master Slender's pocket was picked, among which he enumerates "two Edward shovel-boards, that cost him two and two-pence a piece,"—probably, because they were *lucky* ones; or, not to disparage master Slender's talents for driving a bargain, because they were much worn, and therefore slid smoothly and easily. I presume the reader knows that at *shuffle-board* the shilling is placed on the extreme edge of the table, and propelled towards the mark, by a smart stroke with the palm of the hand.

[4] *One of these* reformados.] i. e. broken or disbanded soldiers. Boyer translates *officier* reformé a *reformado*.

Digitized by Google

he moulded himself so perfectly, observing every trick of their action, as, varying the accent, swearing with an emphasis, indeed, all with so special and exquisite a grace, that, hadst thou seen him, thou wouldst have sworn he might have been serjeant-major, if not lieutenant-coronel to the regiment.

Wel. Why, Brainworm, who would have thought thou hadst been such an artificer?

E. Know. An artificer! an architect. Except a man had studied begging all his life time, and been a weaver of language from his infancy for the cloathing of it, I never saw his rival.

Wel. Where got'st thou this coat, I marle?

Brai. Of a Hounsditch man, sir, one of the devil's near kinsmen, a broker.

Wel. That cannot be, if the proverb hold; for *a crafty knave needs no broker.*[5]

Brai. True, sir; but I did *need a broker, ergo*——

Wel. Well put off:—*no crafty knave*, you'll say.

E. Know. Tut, he has more of these shifts.

Brai. And yet, where I have one the broker has ten, sir.

Re-enter CASH.

Cash. Francis! Martin![6] ne'er a one to be found now? what a spite's this!

Wel. How now, Thomas? Is my brother Kitely within?

Cash. No, sir, my master went forth e'en now; but master Downright is within.—Cob! what Cob! Is he gone too?

[5] *A crafty knave needs no broker.*] This is one of Ray's proverbs; it is also the title of an old black letter pamphlet, by A. Nixon.

[6] *Francis! Martin!*] Cash is impatient for a servant to send after Kitely, according to his promise, p. 76.

Digitized by Google

Wel. Whither went your master, Thomas, canst thou tell?

Cash. I know not; to justice Clement's, I think, sir.—Cob! [*Exit.*

E. Know. Justice Clement! what's he?

Wel. Why, dost thou not know him? He is a city-magistrate, a justice here, an excellent good lawyer, and a great scholar; but the only mad, merry old fellow in Europe. I shewed him you the other day.

E. Know. Oh, is that he? I remember him now. Good faith, and he is a very strange presence, methinks; it shews as if he stood out of the rank from other men: I have heard many of his jests in the University. They say he will commit a man for taking the wall of his horse.

Wel. Ay, or wearing his cloak on one shoulder, or serving of God; any thing, indeed, if it come in the way of his humour.

Re-enter CASH.

Cash. Gasper! Martin! Cob! 'Heart, where should they be, trow?

Bob. Master Kitely's man, pray thee vouchsafe us the lighting of this match.

Cash. Fire on your match! no time but now to *vouchsafe?*—Francis! Cob! [*Exit.*

Bob. Body o' me! here's the remainder of seven pound since yesterday was seven-night. 'Tis your right Trinidado:[7] did you never take any, master Stephen?

Step. No, truly, sir; but I'll learn to take it now, since you commend it so.

[7] *'Tis your right* Trinidado.] The product of that island was at this time much in request: our old cosmographer, no incompetent judge, perhaps, of this matter, tells us, it abounds with the best kind of tobacco, much celebrated formerly by the name of a *Pipe of Trinidado.* Heylin's *Cosmog.* L. iv. p. 114. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

Bob. Sir, believe me, upon my relation, for what I tell you, the world shall not reprove.[8] I have been in the Indies, where this herb grows, where neither myself, nor a dozen gentlemen more of my knowledge, have received the taste of any other nutriment in the world, for the space of one and twenty weeks, but the fume of this simple only: therefore, it cannot be, but 'tis most divine.[9] Further, take it in the nature, in the true kind; so, it makes an antidote, that, had you taken the most deadly poisonous plant in all Italy, it should expel it, and clarify you, with as much ease as I speak. And for your green wound,—your Balsamum and your St. John's wort are all mere gulleries and trash to it, especially your Trinidado: your Nicotian is good too.[1] I could say

[8] *For what I tell you, the world shall not* reprove.] In the quarto it is, *improve*, which has the same sense. The commentators on Shakspeare do not understand this word. In *Hamlet*, Horatio says of young Fortinbras, that he was

"Of *unimproved* mettle, hot and full,"

which is interpreted, "full of spirit not regulated by knowledge." It means just the contrary.

[9] *Therefore it cannot be, but 'tis most* divine.] Bobadill had good authority for his epithet; and, indeed, for the whole of his panegyric:

There, whether it *divine tobacco* were,
Or panachæa, &c. *Fai. Queen.* iii. c. v. 32.

Warton conjectures that Spenser meant by this to compliment Sir Walter Raleigh, (foreigners say it was Sir Francis Drake,) who first introduced tobacco into England: it may be so; but both Spenser and Jonson speak the language of the times. Many grave treatises were now extant, (particularly on the continent,) which celebrated the virtues of this plant in the most extravagant terms. To listen to them, the grand elixir was scarcely more restorative and infallible.

[1] *Your* Nicotian *is good too.*] I know not what kind of tobacco is here meant. Nicotian was originally a generic name. *Nicotiana appellata est* (*scil. tabacum*) *a Joanne Nicotio Regis Galliarum legato in Lusitania anno* 1559, *qui primus hanc plantam Galliis transmisit, &c. Chrys. Magnen. Exercit.* The character which Nicot gives it in his Dictionary answers the description of the poet: Nicotiane

Digitized by Google

what I know of the virtue of it, for the expulsion of rheums, raw humours, crudities, obstructions, with a thousand of this kind; but I profess myself no quacksalver. Only thus much; by Hercules, I do hold it, and will affirm it before any prince in Europe, to be the most sovereign and precious weed that ever the earth tendered to the use of man.

E. Know. This speech would have done decently in a tobacco-trader's mouth.

Re-enter CASH *with* COB.

Cash. At justice Clement's he is, in the middle of Coleman-street.

Cob. Oh, oh!

Bob. Where's the match I gave thee, master Kitely's man?

Cash. Would his match and he, and pipe and all, were at Sancto Domingo! I had forgot it. [*Exit.*

Cob. Ods me, I marle what pleasure or felicity they have in taking this roguish tobacco. It's good for nothing but to choke a man, and fill him full of smoke and embers: there were four died out of one house last week with taking of it, and two more the bell went for yesternight; one of them, they say, will never scape it: he voided a bushel of soot

est une espece d'herbe, de virtu admirable pour guerir toutes navrures, playes, ulceres, chancres, dartes, et autres tels accidents au corps humain. It is strange that Daniel (in his *Arcadia*) should say that it derived its name "from the *island* of Nicotia;" and still more strange, that all these derivative appellations should be finally swallowed up and lost in one taken from the insignificant settlement of Tobago. The time was not far distant, when the virtues of "your Nicotian" were to be discussed before one of those "princes"—I allude to the solemn farce which took place during James's visit to Oxford in 1605, i. e. the disputation in one of the colleges, "*Utrum frequens suffitus Nicotianæ exoticæ sit sanis salutaris?*" at which his majesty graciously condescended to act the part of a moderator.

Digitized by Google

yesterday, upward and downward.[2] By the stocks, an there were no wiser men than I, I'd have it present whipping, man or woman, that should but deal with a tobacco-pipe: why, it will stifle them all in the end, as many as use it; it's little better than ratsbane or rosaker.[3] [BOBADILL *beats him.*

All. Oh, good captain, hold, hold!

Bob. You base cullion, you!

[2] *He voided a bushel of soot yesterday, upward and downward.*] We may easily imagine that tales of this kind were common enough amongst the vulgar, when tobacco first came into use. The poet may probably allude to some recent story, which was currently believed by the people; and the joke is not destitute of humour, when considered in this light. Yet we meet with it very gravely introduced in a serious essay, as a terrible memento to all smokers, and from no less authority than a royal pen. "Surely smoke be-"comes a kitchen, far better than a dining chamber, and yet it "makes a kitchen oftentimes in the inward parts of men; soiling "and infecting them with an unctuous and oily kind of soot, as "hath been found in some great tobacco-takers, that after their "death were opened." King James's *Counterblast to Tobacco*, in his Works in folio, p. 221. WHAL.

The reader will think, I suspect, that enough has been said on this subject; otherwise a volume might easily be filled with quotations for and against the general introduction of this "Indian weed!" Poor James had the mortification to find his *Counterblast* puffed away without much ceremony; he therefore revenged himself by laying a duty on tobacco; which, as it was not very heavy, even for those times, his loving subjects regarded no more than his advice, and smoked on very composedly. Shakspeare is the only one of the dramatic writers of the age of James, who does not condescend to notice tobacco: all the others abound in allusions to it. This is a singularity for which I cannot account, as he is generally sufficiently ready to invest his characters with the prevailing fashion of the times.

It may not be amiss to add, that much of what occurs in Jonson, on the subject of tobacco, was written before the death of Elizabeth, who had no objection, good lady, to this or any thing else, which promoted the commerce, and assisted the revenues of her kingdom.

[3] *Ratsbane or* rosaker.] These, I believe, are pretty nearly the same things; preparations of corrosive sublimate.

Digitized by Google

Re-enter CASH.

Cash. Sir, here's your match.—Come, thou must needs be talking too, thou'rt well enough served.

Cob. Nay, he will not meddle with his match, I warrant you: well, it shall be a dear beating, an I live.

Bob. Do you prate, do you murmur?

E. Know. Nay, good captain, will you regard the humour of a fool? Away, knave.

Wel. Thomas, get him away. [*Exit* CASH *with* COB.

Bob. A whoreson filthy slave, a dung-worm, an excrement! Body o' Cæsar, but that I scorn to let forth so mean a spirit, I'd have stabb'd him to the earth.

Wel. Marry, the law forbid, sir!

Bob. By Pharaoh's foot, I would have done it.

Step. Oh, he swears most admirably! By Pharaoh's foot! Body o' Cæsar!—I shall never do it, sure. Upon mine honour, and by St. George!—No, I have not the right grace.

Mat. Master Stephen, will you any? By this air, the most divine tobacco that ever I drunk.[4]

Step. None, I thank you, sir. O, this gentleman does it rarely too: but nothing like the other. By this air! [*practises at the post.*] As I am a gentleman! By—— [*Exeunt* BOB. *and* MAT.

Brai. [*pointing to master Stephen.*] Master, glance, glance! master Wellbred!

[4] *By this air, the most divine tobacco that ever I* drunk.] This affected expression for smoking tobacco, is found in many of our old writers: "Thou can'st not live on this side of the world, feed well, and *drink tobacco.*" *Miseries of Inforced Marriage.* Again, in Davies's *Scourge of Folly:*

Fumosus cannot eat a bit, but he
Must *drink tobacco*, so to drive it down. *Epig.* 148.

And in Donne:

He droop'd; we went, till one, which did excel
Th' Indians in *drinking his tobacco* well. &c. *Sat.* 1.

Digitized by Google

Step. As I have somewhat to be saved, I protest——

Wel. You are a fool; it needs no affidavit.

E. Know. Cousin, will you any tobacco?

Step. I, sir! Upon my reputation——

E. Know. How now, cousin!

Step. I protest, as I am a gentleman, but no soldier, indeed——

Wel. No, master Stephen! As I remember, your name is entered in the artillery-garden.[5]

Step. Ay, sir, that's true. Cousin, may I swear, as I am a soldier, by that?

E. Know. O yes, that you may; it is all you have for your money.

Step. Then, as I am a gentleman, and a soldier, it is "divine tobacco!"

Wel. But soft, where's master Mathew? Gone?

Brai. No, sir; they went in here.

Wel. O let's follow them: master Mathew is gone to salute his mistress in verse; we shall have the happiness to hear some of his poetry now; he never comes unfurnished.—Brainworm!

Step. Brainworm! Where? Is this Brainworm?

E. Know. Ay, cousin; no words of it, upon your gentility.

Step. Not I, body of me! By this air! St. George! and the foot of Pharaoh!

Wel. Rare! Your cousin's discourse is simply drawn out with oaths.

E. Know. 'Tis larded with them; a kind of French dressing, if you love it.[6] [*Exeunt.*

[5] In the quarto it is, "As I remember, you served on a great horse, last general muster."

[6] *A kind of* French dressing, *if you love it.*] A satire on our continental neighbours for profaneness in conversation, to which, it seems, they were *then* addicted. WHAL.

They are not, even *now*, it is thought, much reformed in this

Digitized by Google

SCENE III. Coleman-street. *A Room in* Justice CLEMENT'S *House.*

Enter KITELY *and* COB.

Kitely.

HA! how many are there, say'st thou?

Cob. Marry, sir, your brother, master Well-bred—

Kit. Tut, beside him: what strangers are there, man.

Cob. Strangers? let me see, one, two; mass, I know not well, there are so many.

Kit. How! so many?

Cob. Ay, there's some five or six of them at the most.

Kit. A swarm, a swarm!
Spite of the devil, how they sting my head
With forked stings, thus wide and large! But, Cob,
How long hast thou been coming hither, Cob?

Cob. A little while, sir.

Kit. Didst thou come running?

Cob. No, sir.

Kit. Nay, then I am familiar with thy haste.
Bane to my fortunes! what meant I to marry?
I, that before was rank'd in such content,
My mind at rest too, in so soft a peace,
Being free master of mine own free thoughts,

respect. It is to be wished that we had contented ourselves with taking the dressing of meat from them; but our travelled coxcombs seldom shewed much reserve in the quantity, or care in the quality of the objects of their importation. If a folly or a vice lay on the surface, they seldom failed to pick it up, and bring it home; and this more constantly, perhaps, in Jonson's time than at any subsequent period.

Digitized by Google

And now become a slave? What! never sigh;
Be of good cheer, man; for thou art a cuckold:
'Tis done, 'tis done! Nay, when such flowing store,
Plenty itself, falls into my wife's lap,
The cornucopiæ will be mine, I know.—
But, Cob,
What entertainment had they? I am sure
My sister and my wife would bid them welcome: ha?

Cob. Like enough, sir; yet I heard not a word of it.

Kit. No;
Their lips were seal'd with kisses, and the voice,
Drown'd in a flood of joy at their arrival,
Had lost her motion, state and faculty.—
Cob,
Which of them was it that first kiss'd my wife,
My sister, I should say?—My wife, alas!
I fear not her: ha! who was it say'st thou?

Cob. By my troth, sir, will you have the truth of it?

Kit. Oh, ay, good Cob, I pray thee heartily.

Cob. Then I am a vagabond, and fitter for Bridewell than your worship's company, if I saw any body to be kiss'd, unless they would have kiss'd the post in the middle of the warehouse; for there I left them all at their tobacco, with a pox!

Kit. How! were they not gone in then ere thou cam'st?

Cob. O no, sir.

Kit. Spite of the devil! what do I stay here then?
Cob, follow me. [*Exit.*

Cob. Nay, soft and fair;[7] I have eggs on the spit;

[7] *Nay, soft and fair; I have* eggs on the spit.] This proverbial expression (employed when a person is occupied on affairs which require his constant attention) occurs again in *Bartholomew Fair:* "I have both *eggs on the spit*, and iron in the fire." It is still in use. "I write short journals now," says Swift to Stella, "I have *eggs on the spit.*"

Digitized by Google

I cannot go yet, sir. Now am I, for some five and fifty reasons, hammering, hammering revenge: oh for three or four gallons of vinegar, to sharpen my wits! Revenge, vinegar revenge, vinegar and mustard revenge! Nay, an he had not lien in my house, 'twould never have grieved me; but being my guest, one that, I'll be sworn, my wife has lent him her smock off her back, while his own shirt has been at washing; pawned her neck-kerchers for clean bands for him; sold almost all my platters, to buy him tobacco; and he to turn monster of ingratitude, and strike his lawful host! Well, I hope to raise up an host of fury for't: here comes justice Clement.

Enter Justice CLEMENT, KNOWELL, *and* FORMAL.

Clem. What's master Kitely gone, Roger?

Form. Ay, sir.

Clem. 'Heart o' me! what made him leave us so abruptly? — How now, sirrah! what make you here? what would you have, ha?

Cob. An't please your worship, I am a poor neighbour of your worship's——

Clem. A poor neighbour of mine! Why, speak, poor neighbour.

Cob. I dwell, sir, at the sign of the water-tankard, hard by the Green Lattice: I have paid scot and lot there any time this eighteen years.

Clem. To the Green Lattice?

Cob. No, sir, to the parish: Marry, I have seldom scaped scot-free at the Lattice.[8]

[8] *Marry, I have seldom scaped scot-free at the* Lattice.] In our author's time, the windows of alehouses were furnished with lattices of various colours; (glass, probably, was too costly and too brittle for the kind of guests which frequented them;) thus we hear of the *red*, the *blue*, and, as in this place, of the *Green Lattice*. There is a lane in the city yet called *Green*-lettuce (lattice) Lane, from an alehouse which once stood in it; and serjeant Hall, in the *Tatler*, directs a letter to his brother, "at

Digitized by Google

Clem. O, well! What business has my poor neighbour with me?

Cob. An't like your worship, I am come to crave the peace of your worship.

Clem. Of me, knave! Peace of me, knave! Did I ever hurt thee, or threaten thee, or wrong thee, ha?

Cob. No, sir; but your worship's warrant for one that has wrong'd me, sir: his arms are at too much liberty, I would fain have them bound to a treaty of peace, an my credit could compass it with your worship.

Clem. Thou goest far enough about for't, I am sure.

Know. Why, dost thou go in danger of thy life for him, friend?

Cob. No, sir; but I go in danger of my death every hour, by his means; an I die within a twelvemonth and a day,[9] I may swear by the law of the land that he killed me.

Clem. How, how, knave, swear he killed thee, and by the law? What pretence, what colour hast thou for that?

Cob. Marry, an't please your worship, both black and blue; colour enough, I warrant you. I have it here to shew your worship.

Clem. What is he that gave you this, sirrah!

the *Red* Lettace (lattice) in Butcher Row. It was through one of these that Bardolph spied Falstaff's boy. "He called me even now my lord, through a *red lattice*." *Hen. IV. Part II.* A. ii. S. 2. *Lattices* of various colours, or chequers, as they were sometimes called, formed also a very common ale-house sign, at this period.

[9] *An I die within a* twelvemonth and a day, &c.] This is the period of time required in the construction of the common law, to determine on the cause of the death of a man bruised or wounded by another. Thus Shirley: "Ay, but I will not hurt "her, I warrant thee: an she die *within a twelvemonth and a day*, "I'll be hanged for her." *Witty Fair One.*

Digitized by Google

Cob. A gentleman and a soldier, he says, he is, of the city here.

Clem. A soldier of the city! What call you him?

Cob. Captain Bobadill.

Clem. Bobadill! and why did he bob and beat you, sirrah? How began the quarrel betwixt you, ha? speak truly, knave, I advise you.

Cob. Marry, indeed, an't please your worship, only because I spake against their vagrant tobacco, as I came by them when they were taking on't; for nothing else.

Clem. Ha! you speak against tobacco? Formal, his name.

Form. What's your name, sirrah?

Cob. Oliver, sir, Oliver Cob, sir.

Clem. Tell Oliver Cob he shall go to the jail, Formal.

Form. Oliver Cob, my master, justice Clement, says you shall go to the jail.

Cob. O, I beseech your worship, for God's sake, dear master justice!

Clem. 'Sprecious! an such drunkards and tankards as you are, come to dispute of tobacco once, I have done: Away with him!

Cob. O, good master justice! Sweet old gentleman! [*to* KNOWELL.

Know. "Sweet Oliver,"[1] would I could do thee any good!—Justice Clement, let me intreat you, sir.

Clem. What! a thread-bare rascal, a beggar, a slave that never drunk out of better than piss-pot metal in his life! and he to deprave and abuse the

[1] "Sweet *Oliver*."] It may be just worth noticing that this epithet almost always accompanies the mention of this gentle rival of the mad Orlando in fame: thus Decker, "This *sweet* Oliver will eat mutton till he be ready to burst." *Honest Whore.* And Jonson again, in his *Execration upon Vulcan:*

All the mad Rolands and *sweet* Olivers.

Digitized by Google

virtue of an herb so generally received in the courts of princes, the chambers of nobles, the bowers of sweet ladies, the cabins of soldiers!—Roger, away with him! Od's precious——I say, go to.

Cob. Dear master justice, let me be beaten again, I have deserved it; but not the prison, I beseech you.

Know. Alas, poor Oliver!

Clem. Roger, make him a warrant:—he shall not go, I but fear the knave.[2]

Form. Do not stink, sweet Oliver, you shall not go; my master will give you a warrant.

Cob. O, the lord maintain his worship, his worthy worship!

Clem. Away, dispatch him. [*Ex.* FORM. *and* COB.] —How now, master Knowell, in dumps, in dumps! Come, this becomes not.

Know. Sir, would I could not feel my cares.

Clem. Your cares are nothing: they are like my cap, soon put on, and as soon put off. What! your son is old enough to govern himself; let him run his course, it's the only way to make him a staid man. If he were an unthrift, a ruffian, a drunkard, or a licentious liver, then you had reason; you had reason to take care: but, being none of these, mirth's

[2] *I but* fear *the knave.*] The verb *fear* is used by our old writers, in the sense of *frighten* or *terrify*. Thus Shakspeare,

> I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine,
> Hath *fear'd* the valiant. *Merchant of Venice.*

And Middleton,

> Art not ashamed that any flesh should *fear* thee?
> *A mad World my Masters.* WHAL.

As a proof how little our old dramatists were understood at the Restoration, it may be sufficient to mention that Dryden censures Jonson for an improper use of this word (the sense of which he altogether mistakes) in a subsequent passage. Dryden had "pray'd his pible ill" at this time, or he could not have fallen into such an error.

Digitized by Google

my witness, an I had twice so many cares as you have, I'd drown them all in a cup of sack. Come, come, let's try it: I muse your parcel of a soldier returns not all this while. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A Room in* KITELY'S *House.*

Enter DOWNRIGHT, *and* Dame KITELY.

Downright.

WELL, sister, I tell you true; and you'll find it so in the end.

Dame K. Alas, brother, what would you have me to do? I cannot help it; you see my brother brings them in here; they are his friends.

Down. His friends! his fiends. 'Slud! they do nothing but haunt him up and down like a sort of unlucky spirits, and tempt him to all manner of villainy that can be thought of. Well, by this light, a little thing would make me play the devil with some of them: an 'twere not more for your husband's sake than any thing else, I'd make the house too hot for the best on 'em; they should say, and swear, hell were broken loose, ere they went hence. But, by God's will, 'tis nobody's fault but yours; for an you had done as you might have done, they should have been parboiled, and baked too, every mother's son, ere they should have come in, e're a one of them.

Dame K. God's my life! did you ever hear the like? what a strange man is this! Could I keep out all them, think you? I should put myself against

Digitized by Google

half a dozen men, should I? Good faith, you'd mad the patient'st body in the world,[3] to hear you talk so, without any sense or reason.

Enter mistress BRIDGET, *master* MATHEW, *and* BOBADILL; *followed, at a distance, by* WELLBRED, E. KNOWELL, STEPHEN, *and* BRAINWORM.

Brid. Servant,[4] in troth you are too prodigal
Of your wit's treasure, thus to pour it forth
Upon so mean a subject as my worth.
Mat. You say well, mistress, and I mean as well.

[3] *You'd mad the patient'st body in the world, &c.*] Mr. Whalley has here thought it necessary to obviate, at great length, an objection, which no man in his senses would think of making, to his printing this and other speeches as prose. Prose, he truly says, he found them, and prose he has properly left them; "though aware," he adds, "that a *very little alteration* would have reduced them to a hobbling kind of measure." It must be confessed that this is a notable mode of improving upon an author; and wonderful must be the advantage derived from it, both to his sense and his language! luckily, however, the experiment has been seldom tried on Jonson; but on Beaumont and Fletcher it has been practised, Mr. Whalley thinks, with great success. Their "humorous speeches," by the plain and simple process of "a little alteration," (such as lopping off words and phrases here, foisting them in there, together with other ingenious contrivances of a similar kind,) "have been happily rescued from the deformity in which they once appeared, by their late very ingenious editors!"

Unfortunately, the laws of poetry are a mere *brutum fulmen*, and Apollo and the Muses, in these days, have less power than a parish beadle; otherwise Seward and Sympson, with all their *ingenuity*, would have found some difficulty in escaping a serious whipping at the cart's-tail of Parnassus. Whole scenes, nay whole acts, of the most exquisite prose, have those miserable bunglers, whose dulness is scarcely surpassed by their temerity, transmuted, by their unwarrantable corruptions, into a kind of jargon (metre it is not), which "would mad the patient'st body in the world" to hobble through it.

[4] Servant, *in troth*, &c.] *Servant* was the title which, in Jonson's days, every lady bestowed upon her professed lover. To have noticed this once, is sufficient.

Digitized by Google

Down. Hoy-day, here is stuff!

Well. O, now stand close; pray heaven, she can get him to read! he should do it of his own natural impudency.

Brid. Servant, what is this same, I pray you?

Mat. Marry, an elegy, an elegy, an odd toy—

Down. To mock an ape withal![5] O, I could sew up his mouth, now.

Dame K. Sister, I pray you let's hear it.

Down. Are you rhime-given too?

Mat. Mistress, I'll read it, if you please.

Brid. Pray you do, servant.

Down. O, here's no foppery! Death! I can indure the stocks better. [*Exit.*

E. Know. What ails thy brother? can he not hold his water at reading of a ballad?

Wel. O, no; a rhime to him is worse than cheese, or a bag-pipe: but mark; you lose the protestation.

Mat. Faith, I did it in a humour; I know not how it is; but please you come near, sir. This gentleman has judgment, he knows how to censure of a—— pray you, sir, you can judge?

Step. Not I, sir; upon my reputation, and by the foot of Pharaoh!

Wel. O, chide your cousin for swearing.

E. Know. Not I, so long as he does not forswear himself.

Bob. Master Mathew, you abuse the expectation of your dear mistress, and her fair sister: fie! while you live avoid this prolixity.

Mat. I shall, sir; well, *incipere dulce.*

E. Know. How! *insipere dulce!* a sweet thing to be a fool, indeed!

[5] ——— *an odd toy*
To mock an ape withall.] This expression was proverbial. So, in the title to one of Marston's satires,

Here is a toy to mock an ape, indeed. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

Wel. What, do you take *incipere* in that sense?

E. Know. You do not, you! This was your villainy, to gull him with a motte.[6]

Wel. O, the benchers phrase; *pauca verba,*[7] *pauca verba!*

Mat. *Rare creature, let me speak without offence,*
Would God my rude words had the influence
To rule thy thoughts, as thy fair looks do mine,
Then shouldst thou be his prisoner, who is thine.

E. Know. This is in Hero and Leander.[8]

[6] *This was your villainy, to gull him with a* motte.] This is the reading of the quarto as well as of the folio; it should not therefore have been changed by Mr. Whalley into *motto.* Mot or motte was the word then in use.

[7] *O, the* benchers *phrase, pauca verba.*] *Benchers* were idle sots who spent their time, sleeping and waking, upon ale-house benches. Thus, in *Sir John Oldcastle,* Part I.

"———— When the vulgar sort
"Sit on their ale-*bench* with their cups and cans."

Prince Henry declares of Falstaff, that he is grown fat with "*sleeping* out his afternoons upon *benches;*" and the parson of Wrotham, in the play quoted above, boasts of himself, that he is become "a drinker, a *bencher,* and a wencher." A. ii. S. 1.

Why *pauca verba* should be the benchers phrase, I cannot pretend to say, any more than why "dun's the mouse," should be the constable's; it is however given to persons of this description in many of our old plays: and Christophero Sly, a *bencher* of the first order, is furnished with a similar expression—*pocas palabras!* Perhaps it was an authoritative injunction to casual guests, not to disturb them in their serious occupations of drinking and sleeping; or it might be a kind of cabalistical watch-word among themselves, intimating that the proper business of a drunkard was to drink and not to talk. But this, as Spenser says,

"—— is matter all too high for me."

[8] *This is in* Hero and Leander.] A translation or imitation of the Greek poem by Musæus, on the story of these unfortunate lovers, was begun by Christopher Marlow; who dying before he had finished the whole, it was completed by George Chapman, and published by him, as both A. Wood and Langbaine tell us, in the year 1606. I *suspect,* however, that there was an earlier edition, or that part of it had got abroad in manuscript; for the lines above are taken from it; and it was in high reputation

Digitized by Google

Wel. O, ay; peace, we shall have more of this.

Mat. *Be not unkind and fair: misshapen stuff*
Is of behaviour boisterous and rough.

Wel. How like you that, sir?

[*Master* STEPHEN *shakes his head.*

E. Know. 'Slight, he shakes his head like a bottle, to feel an there be any brain in it.[9]

Mat. But observe the catastrophe, now:
And I in duty will exceed all other,
As you in beauty do excel Love's mother.

E. Know. Well, I'll have him free of the wit brokers, for he utters nothing but stolen remnants.

Wel. O, forgive it him.

E. Know. A filching rogue, hang him!—and from the dead! it's worse than sacrilege.

WELLBRED, E. KNOWELL, *and master* STEPHEN *come forward.*

Wel. Sister, what have you here, verses? pray

at this time. Alluding to the circumstance of Marlow's death, young Knowell accuses master Mathew of filching from the dead. WHAL.

Whalley is right; among the entries at Stationers Hall, is the following, by John Wolfe, 1593. "A booke entitled Hero and Leander, being an amorous poem, by C. Marlow:" and there appears to have been another entry in 1597. See the Prolegomena to Malone's Shakspeare. The version is also twice mentioned in Nash's *Lenten Stuff*, which appeared in 1599; and which Whalley must have seen. The character of Marlow is not ill drawn by the author of the *Return from Parnassus.*

"Marlowe was happy in his buskin'd muse,
"Alas, unhappy in his life and end!
"Pity it is that wit so ill should dwell,
"Wit lost from heaven, but vices sent from hell."

He was a man of impious principles, and flagitious life, and perished in a drunken broil. Jonson thought very highly of his talents.

[9] *'Slight, he shakes his head, &c.*] The writer of Junius's Letters has been poaching here: he has taken this poor witticism, which, after all, is not Jonson's, and applied it to Sir W. Blackstone! This may serve to console master Stephen.

Digitized by Google

you let's see: who made these verses? they are excellent good.

Mat. O, master Wellbred, 'tis your disposition to say so, sir. They were good in the morning; I made them *ex tempore*, this morning.

Wel. How! *ex tempore?*

Mat. Ay, would I might be hanged else; ask captain Bobadill: he saw me write them, at the—— pox on it!—the Star, yonder.

Brai. Can he find in his heart to curse the stars so?

E. Know. Faith, his are even with him; they have curst him enough already.

Step. Cousin, how do you like this gentleman's verses?

E. Know. O, admirable! the best that ever I heard, coz.

Step. Body o' Cæsar, they are admirable! The best that I ever heard, as I am a soldier!

Re-enter DOWNRIGHT.

Down. I am vext, I can hold ne'er a bone of me still: Heart, I think they mean to build and breed here!

Wel. Sister, you have a simple servant here, that crowns your beauty with such encomiums and devices; you may see what it is to be the mistress of a wit, that can make your perfections so transparent, that every blear eye may look through them, and see him drowned over head and ears in the deep well of desire: Sister Kitely, I marvel you get you not a servant that can rhime, and do tricks too.

Down. O, monster! impudence itself! tricks!

Dame K. Tricks, brother! what tricks?

Brid. Nay, speak, I pray you, what tricks?

Digitized by Google

Dame K. Ay, never spare any body here; but say, what tricks.

Brid. Passion of my heart, do tricks!

Wel. 'Slight, here's a trick vied and revied![1] Why, you monkies, you, what a cater-wauling do you keep? has he not given you rhimes and verses and tricks?

Down. O, the fiend!

Wel. Nay, you lamp of virginity, that take it in snuff so, come, and cherish this tame poetical fury in your servant; you'll be begg'd else shortly for a concealment:[2] go to, reward his muse. You cannot

[1] *Here's a trick* vied *and* revied!] Terms in the old game at cards, called Gleek. WHAL.

What is explained by this? but thus, too frequently, notes are written. Neither *trick* nor *vie* was peculiar to Gleek, as it would be easy to mention a dozen old games, in which the terms perpetually recur. To *vie*, was to hazard, to put down, a certain sum upon a hand of cards; to *revie*, was to cover it with a larger sum, by which the challenged became the challenger, and was to be *revied* in his turn, with a proportionate increase of stake. This vying and revying upon each other continued till one of the party lost courage and gave up the whole; or obtained, for a stipulated sum, a discovery of his antagonist's cards; when the best hand swept the table. It may be worth observing here, that the final stake, i. e. the largest sum which a gamester would adventure, was called his *rest*. This is the unfortunate term which the commentators on our old poets are for ever confounding with the *rest* of a musquet.

[2] *Come, and cherish this tame poetical fury in your servant, you'll be* begg'd *else shortly for a* concealment.] Alluding to the practice in queen Elizabeth's time of begging lands, which had formerly been appropriated to superstitious uses. But the account of it by Strype, to whom Whalley contents himself with referring, is so explicit that I shall give it in his own words: "This year (viz. 1572) a command from the queen went forth, for the withdrawing the commissions for *concealments*, from all to whom she had granted them, which gave a great quieting to her subjects who were excessively plagued with these commissioners. When monasteries were dissolved, and the lands thereof, and afterwards colleges, chantries, and fraternities were all given to the crowd, some demeans here and there pertaining thereunto were still privily retained, and possessed by certain private persons, or corporations,

Digitized by Google

give him less than a shilling in conscience, for the book he had it out of cost him a teston at least.[3] How now gallants! Master Mathew! Captain! what, all sons of silence, no spirit?

Down. Come, you might practise your ruffian tricks somewhere else, and not here, I wuss;[4] this is no tavern nor drinking-school, to vent your exploits in.

Wel. How now! whose cow has calved?

Down. Marry, that has mine, sir. Nay, boy, never look askance at me for the matter; I'll tell you of it, I, sir; you and your companions mend yourselves when I have done.

Wel. My companions!

Down. Yes, sir, your companions, so I say; I am not afraid of you, nor them neither; your hang-byes here. You must have your poets and your potlings, your soldados and foolados to follow you up and down the city; and here they must come to domineer and swagger. Sirrah, you ballad-singer, and slops

or churches. This caused the queen, when she understood it, to grant commissions to some persons to search after these *concealments*, and to retrieve them to the crown;" (or, rather, Strype should have added, to the hungry courtiers who *begged* them;) "but it was a world to consider what unjust oppressions of the people and the poor this occasioned by some griping men that were concerned therein." *Annals of Elizabeth*, vol. ii. 209.

[3] *The book he had it out of cost him a* teston *at least.*] "*Testons* (or, as we commonly call them, testers, from a head that was upon them) were coined 34 H. VIII. Sir H. Spelman says they are a French coin of the value of 18d. and he does not know but they might have gone for as much in England. He says it was brass, and covered over with silver, and went in H. VIIIth's time for 12d. but 1 E. VI. it was brought down to 9*d.* and then to 6*d.* which name it still retains." Fleetwood's *Chron. Pretios.* c. iii. This, though not rigidly correct, as to dates, is I presume, sufficiently so for the present purpose.

[4] *Not here, I* wuss.] I omitted to observe (p. 9) that *wusse* was merely a vulgarism for *wis*, to know. Our old poets use the term as a familiar and petty interjection. I wis, or *wusse*, i. e. I trow, truly, &c.

Digitized by Google

your fellow there,[5] get you out, get you home; or by this steel, I'll cut off your ears, and that presently.

Wel. 'Slight, stay, let's see what he dare do; cut off his ears! cut a whetstone. You are an ass, do you see; touch any man here, and by this hand I'll run my rapier to the hilts in you.

Down. Yea that would I fain see, boy.

[*They all draw.*

Dame K. O Jesu! Murder! Thomas! Gasper!

Brid. Help, help! Thomas!

Enter CASH *and some of the house to part them.*

E. Know. Gentlemen forbear, I pray you.

Bob. Well, sirrah, you Holofernes; by my hand, I will pink your flesh full of holes with my rapier for this; I will, by this good heaven! nay, let him come, let him come, gentlemen; by the body of St. George, I'll not kill him. [*Offer to fight again, and are parted.*

Cash. Hold, hold, good gentlemen.

Down. You whoreson, bragging coystril![6]

Enter KITELY.

Kit. Why, how now! what's the matter, what's the stir here?
Whence springs the quarrel? Thomas! where is he?
Put up your weapons, and put off this rage:

[5] *And* slops *your fellow there.*] Downright had already noticed the "Gargantua breech" of Bobadill. *Slops* were the large loose breeches so fashionable during the greater part of Elizabeth's reign: they are often mentioned by our old dramatists, who seem about the period in which this play appeared, to have laughed them out of countenance, or, at least to have materially reduced their bulk.

[6] *You whoreson, bragging* coystril!] A mean, dastardly wretch. The etymology of this word is uncertain; to bring it from *coustillier* (a knight's attendant) as Whalley and Tollet do, is to confound the properties of language. The term, whatever be its origin, is undoubtedly taken from the *Falconer's Vocabulary*, where a worthless and degenerate breed of hawks are called *kestrils*.

Digitized by Google

My wife and sister, they are cause of this.
What, Thomas! where is this knave?

Cash. Here, sir.

Wel. Come, let's go: this is one of my brother's ancient humours, this.

Step. I am glad no body was hurt by his ancient humour. [*Exeunt* WEL. STEP. E. KNO. BOB. *and* BRAI.

Kit. Why, how now, brother, who enforced this brawl?

Down. A sort of lewd rake-hells, that care neither for God nor the devil. And they must come here to read ballads, and roguery, and trash! I'll mar the knot of 'em ere I sleep, perhaps; especially Bob there, he that's all manner of shapes; and songs and sonnets, his fellow.

Brid. Brother, indeed you are too violent,
Too sudden in your humour; and you know
My brother Wellbred's temper will not bear
Any reproof, chiefly in such a presence,
Where every slight disgrace he should receive
Might wound him in opinion and respect.

Down. Respect! what talk you of respect among such, as have no spark of manhood, nor good manners? 'Sdeins, I am ashamed to hear you! respect! [*Exit.*

Brid. Yes, there was one a civil gentleman,
And very worthily demean'd himself.

Kit. O, that was some love of your's, sister.

Brid. A love of mine! I would it were no worse, brother;
You'd pay my portion sooner than you think for.

Dame K. Indeed he seem'd to be a gentleman of an exceeding fair disposition, and of very excellent good parts. [*Exeunt dame* KITELY *and* BRIDGET.

Kit. Her love, by heaven! my wife's minion.
Fair disposition! excellent good parts!
Death! these phrases are intolerable.

Digitized by Google

Good parts! how should she know his parts?
His parts! Well, well, well, well, well, well;
It is too plain, too clear: Thomas, come hither.
What, are they gone?

Cash. Ay, sir, they went in.

My mistress, and your sister——

Kit. Are any of the gallants within?

Cash. No, sir, they are all gone.

Kit. Art thou sure of it?

Cash. I can assure you, sir.

Kit. What gentleman was that they praised so, Thomas?

Cash. One, they call him master Knowell, a handsome young gentleman, sir.

Kit. Ay, I thought so; my mind gave me as much:
I'll die, but they have hid him in the house,
Somewhere; I'll go and search; go with me, Thomas:
Be true to me, and thou shalt find me a master.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The Lane before* COB'S *House.*

Enter COB.

Cob [*knocks at the door.*]

WHAT, Tib! Tib, I say!

Tib. [*within.*] How now, what cuckold is that knocks so hard?

Enter TIB.

O, husband, is it you! what's the news?

Cob. Nay, you have stunn'd me, i'faith; you have given me a knock o' the forehead will stick by me. Cuckold! 'Slid, cuckold!

Tib. Away, you fool! did I know it was you that

Digitized by Google

knock'd? Come, come, you may call me as bad when you list.

Cob. May I? Tib, you are a whore.

Tib. You lie in your throat, husband.

Cob. How, the lie! and in my throat too! do you long to be stabb'd, ha?

Tib. Why, you are no soldier, I hope.

Cob. O, must you be stabb'd by a soldier? Mass, that's true! when was Bobadill here, your captain? that rogue, that foist, that fencing Burgullian?[7] I'll tickle him, i'faith.

Tib. Why, what's the matter, trow!

Cob. O, he has basted me rarely, sumptuously! but I have it here in black and white, [*Pulls out the warrant.*] for his black and blue, shall pay him. O, the justice, the honestest old brave Trojan in London; I do honour the very flea of his dog. A plague on him though, he put me once in a villainous filthy fear; marry, it vanished away like the smoke of tobacco; but I was smoked soundly first. I thank the devil, and his good angel, my guest. Well, wife, or Tib, which you will, get you in, and lock the door, I charge you let no body in to you, wife; no body in to you; those are my words: not captain Bob himself, nor the fiend in his likeness. You are a woman, you have flesh and blood enough in you to be tempted; therefore keep the door shut upon all comers.

[7] *That* foist, *that fencing* Burgullian.] *Foist* was one of the thousand cant terms for a cut-purse. *Burgullian*, or Burgonian, means a bully, a braggadocio; in allusion, Hawkins says, (*Origin of the English Drama*, vol. iii. 91), to the Bastard of Burgundy, who was overthrown in Smithfield by Anthony Woodville, 1467. This is by no means unlikely; for our ancestors, who were not very delicate, nor, generally speaking, much overburthened with respect for the feelings of foreigners, had a number of vituperative appellations derived from their real or supposed ill-qualities, of many of which the precise import cannot now be ascertained.

Digitized by Google

Tib. I warrant you, there shall no body enter here without my consent.

Cob. Nor with your consent, sweet Tib; and so I leave you.

Tib. It's more than you know, whether you leave me so.

Cob. How?

Tib. Why, *sweet.*

Cob. Tut, sweet or sour, thou art a flower. Keep close thy door, I ask no more. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A Room in the Windmill Tavern.*

Enter E. KNOWELL, WELLBRED, STEPHEN, *and* BRAINWORM *disguised as before.*

E. Knowell.

WELL, Brainworm, perform this business happily, and thou makest a purchase of my love for ever.

Wel. I'faith, now let thy spirits use their best faculties: but, at any hand, remember the message to my brother; for there's no other means to start him.

Brai. I warrant you, sir; fear nothing; I have a nimble soul has waked all forces of my phant'sie by this time, and put them in true motion. What you have possest me withal, I'll discharge it amply, sir; make it no question.[8] [*Exit.*

Wel. Forth, and prosper, Brainworm. Faith, Ned, how dost thou approve of my abilities in this device.

[8] *What you have* possessed *me withal, &c.*] i. e. what you have *informed* me of. Thus Davenport, "Having *possessed him with* the passages which passed upon his sister." *City Night Cap*, A. iii. S. 1. And see p. 32.

Digitized by Google

E. Know. Troth, well, howsoever; but it will come excellent, if it take.

Wel. Take, man! why it cannot choose but take, if the circumstances miscarry not: but, tell me ingenuously, dost thou affect my sister Bridget as thou pretend'st?

E. Know. Friend, am I worth belief?

Wel. Come, do not protest. In faith, she is a maid of good ornament, and much modesty; and, except I conceived very worthily of her, thou should'st not have her.

E. Know. Nay, that, I am afraid, will be a question yet, whether I shall have her, or no.

Wel. 'Slid, thou shalt have her; by this light thou shalt.

E. Know. Nay, do not swear.

Wel. By this hand thou shalt have her; I'll go fetch her presently. 'Point but where to meet, and as I am an honest man I'll bring her.

E. Know. Hold, hold, be temperate.

Wel. Why, by —— what shall I swear by? thou shalt have her, as I am ——

E. Know. Pray thee, be at peace, I am satisfied; and do believe thou wilt omit no offered occasion to make my desires complete.

Wel. Thou shalt see, and know, I will not.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The* Old Jewry.

Enter FORMAL, *and* KNOWELL.

Formal.

WAS your man a soldier, sir?

Know. Ay, a knave,
I took him begging o' the way, this morning,
As I came over Moorfields.

Digitized by Google

Enter BRAINWORM *disguised as before.*

O, here he is!—You've made fair speed, believe me:
Where, in the name of sloth, could you be thus?

Brai. Marry, peace be my comfort, where I thought I should have had little comfort of your worship's service.

Know. How so?

Brai. O, sir, your coming to the city, your entertainment of me, and your sending me to watch —— indeed, all the circumstances either of your charge, or my employment, are as open to your son, as to yourself.

Know. How should that be, unless that villain, Brainworm,
Have told him of the letter, and discover'd
All that I strictly charged him to conceal?
'Tis so.

Brai. I am partly o' the faith 'tis so, indeed.

Know. But, how should he know thee to be my man?

Brai. Nay, sir, I cannot tell; unless it be by the black art. Is not your son a scholar, sir?

Know. Yes, but I hope his soul is not allied
Unto such hellish practice: if it were,
I had just cause to weep my part in him,
And curse the time of his creation.
But, where didst thou find them, Fitz-Sword?

Brai. You should rather ask where they found me, sir; for, I'll be sworn, I was going along in the street, thinking nothing, when, of a sudden, a voice calls, *Mr. Knowell's man!* another cries, *Soldier!* and thus half a dozen of them, till they had call'd me within a house, where I no sooner came, but they seem'd men,[9] and out flew all their rapiers at my

[9] *Where I no sooner came, but they seem'd* men.] I suppose he thought them so, before he saw them. The sentence is dark; but

Digitized by Google

bosom, with some three or four score oaths to accompany them; and all to tell me, I was but a dead man, if I did not confess where you were, and how I was employed, and about what; which when they could not get out of me, (as, I protest, they must have dissected, and made an anatomy of me first, and so I told them,) they lock'd me up into a room in the top of a high house, whence by great miracle (having a light heart) I slid down by a bottom of packthread into the street, and so 'scaped. But, sir, thus much I can assure you, for I heard it while I was lock'd up, there were a great many rich merchants and brave citizen's wives with them at a feast; and your son, master Edward, withdrew with one of them, and has 'pointed to meet her anon at one Cob's house, a water-bearer, that dwells by the Wall. Now, there your worship shall be sure to take him, for there he preys, and fail he will not.

Know. Nor will I fail to break his match, I doubt not.
Go thou along with justice Clement's man,
And stay there for me. At one Cob's house, say'st thou?

Brai. Ay, sir, there you shall have him. [*Exit Know.*] Yes—invisible![1] Much wench, or much

there seems to be an antithesis designed between *voice* and *man*. He only tells his master, that he heard several voices calling him; and when he entered the house, these voices were personified, and turned to men. If this is not the meaning of the author, there is a word omitted. Their subsequent behaviour might lead us to think, he called them *mad-men*. WHAL.

There is nothing of this in the quarto, which reads, "*one* calls, Soldier, till they got me within doors, where I no sooner came, but out flies their rapiers, and all bent against my breast." So that if Whalley's first conjecture be right, Jonson must have altered the passage solely for the sake of introducing this strange opposition of terms.

[1] *Yes—invisible! Much wench, or much son!*] *Yes—invisible!* That is, are you gone out of sight? What follows is proverbial;

Digitized by Google

son! 'Slight, when he has staid there three or four hours, travailling with the expectation of wonders, and at length be deliver'd of air! O the sport that I should then take to look on him, if I durst! But now I mean to appear no more afore him in this shape: I have another trick to act yet. O that I were so happy as to light on a nupson [2] now of this justice's novice!—Sir, I make you stay somewhat long.

Form. Not a whit, sir. Pray you what do you mean, sir?

Brai. I was putting up some papers.

Form. You have been lately in the wars, sir, it seems.

Brai. Marry have I, sir, to my loss, and expense of all, almost.

Form. Troth, sir, I would be glad to bestow a pottle of wine on you, if it please you to accept it——

Brai. O, sir——

Form. But to hear the manner of your services, and your devices in the wars; they say they be very strange, and not like those a man reads in the Roman histories, or sees at Mile-end.[3]

Much was a term of various senses, and often used as an expression of disdain and contempt. Much good may they do you, both wench, and son, if you find them. WHAL.

I know not what to say of Whalley's note. *Invisible*, seems to be a humourous addition to Brainworm's speech, after his master was out of hearing——"there you shall have him——yes, invisible!" that is, not at all.

Much! is an ironical exclamation for *little*, or *none*, in which sense it frequently occurs in our old dramatists. Thus in Heywood's *Edward IV.*

"*Much* duchess! and *much* queen, I trow!"

And in Shakspeare,

Is it not past two o'clock? and here's *much* Orlando!

[2] *To light on a* nupson] i. e. O that I might happily find this justice's man to be a *nupson!* A nupson is an oaf, a simpleton. See the *Devil's an Ass.*

[3] *Or sees at* Mile-end.] The usual training ground of the city.

Digitized by Google

Brai. No, I assure you, sir; why at any time when it please you, I shall be ready to discourse to you all I know;—and more too somewhat. [*Aside.*

Form. No better time than now, sir; we'll go to the Windmill: there we shall have a cup of neat grist, we call it. I pray you, sir, let me request you to the Windmill.

Brai. I'll follow you, sir;—and make grist of you, if I have good luck. [*Aside.*] [*Exeunt.*

Scene V. Moorfields.

Enter Mathew, E. Knowell, Bobadill, *and* Stephen.

Mathew.

SIR, did your eyes ever taste the like clown of him where we were to-day, Mr. Wellbred's half brother? I think the whole earth cannot shew his parallel, by this daylight.

E. Know. We were now speaking of him: captain Bobadill tells me he is fallen foul of you too.

Mat. O, ay, sir, he threatened me with the bastinado.

Bob. Ay, but I think, I taught you prevention this morning, for that: You shall kill him beyond question; if you be so generously minded.

Mat. Indeed, it is a most excellent trick. [*Fences.*

Bob. O, you do not give spirit enough to your motion, you are too tardy, too heavy! O, it must be done like lightning, hay![4]

[*Practises at a post with his cudgel.*

This jest on the city campaigns was, doubtless, productive of mirth, for it occurs in many of our old plays.

[4] *O, it must be done like lightning,* hay!] i. e. *a hit!* from the Italian *hai,* you have it. Our fencers very innocently cry *ha!* upon these occasions.

Digitized by Google

Mat. Rare, captain!

Bob. Tut! 'tis nothing, an't be not done in a ——— punto.

E. Know. Captain, did you ever prove yourself upon any of our masters of defence here?

Mat. O good sir! yes, I hope he has.

Bob. I will tell you, sir. Upon my first coming to the city, after my long travel for knowledge, in that mystery only, there came three or four of them to me, at a gentleman's house, where it was my chance to be resident at that time, to intreat my presence at their schools; and withal so much importuned me, that I protest to you, as I am a gentleman, I was ashamed of their rude demeanour out of all measure: Well, I told them that to come to a public school, they should pardon me, it was opposite, in diameter, to my humour; but, if so be they would give their attendance at my lodging, I protested to do them what right or favour I could, as I was a gentleman, and so forth.

E. Know. So, sir! then you tried their skill?

Bob. Alas, soon tried: you shall hear, sir. Within two or three days after, they came; and, by honesty, fair sir, believe me, I graced them exceedingly, shewed them some two or three tricks of prevention have purchased them since a credit to admiration: they cannot deny this; and yet now they hate me, and why? because I am excellent; and for no other vile reason on the earth.

E. Know. This is strange and barbarous, as ever I heard.

Bob. Nay, for a more instance of their preposterous natures; but note, sir. They have assaulted me[5] some three, four, five, six of them together, as I

[5] *They have assaulted me*, &c.] Nothing can be more exquisitely imagined than the conduct of this scene, in which Bobadill boasts so loudly of his skill and intrepidity, just as disgrace is about to

Digitized by Google

have walked alone in divers skirts i' the town, as Turn-bull, White-chapel, Shore-ditch, which were then my quarters; and since, upon the Exchange, at my lodging, and at my ordinary: where I have driven them afore me the whole length of a street, in the open view of all our gallants, pitying to hurt them, believe me. Yet all this lenity will not overcome their spleen; they will be doing with the pismire, raising a hill a man may spurn abroad with his foot at pleasure. By myself, I could have slain them all, but I delight not in murder. I am loth to bear any other than this bastinado for them: yet I hold it good polity not to go disarmed, for though I be skilful, I may be oppressed with multitudes.

E. Know. Ay, believe me, may you, sir: and in my conceit, our whole nation should sustain the loss by it, if it were so.

Bob. Alas, no! what's a peculiar man to a nation? not seen.

E. Know. O, but your skill, sir.

Bob. Indeed, that might be some loss; but who respects it? I will tell you, sir, by the way of private, and under seal; I am a gentleman, and live here obscure, and to myself; but were I known to her majesty and the lords,—observe me,—I would undertake, upon this poor head and life, for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the intire lives of her subjects in general; but to save the one half, nay, three parts of her yearly charge in holding war, and against what enemy soever. And how would I do it, think you?

burst on his head. In the elevation of his fancy, Jonson, with genuine humour, makes him forget his usual caution, and betray his haunts, which, in his first conversation with master Mathew, he appears so solicitous to conceal. All the places which he enumerates were the abodes of poverty and vice; and his acquaintance with them completely disproves his claims to gentility and fashion.

Digitized by Google

E. Know. Nay, I know not, nor can I conceive.

Bob. Why thus, sir. I would select nineteen more, to myself, throughout the land; gentlemen they should be of good spirit, strong and able constitution; I would choose them by an instinct, a character that I have: and I would teach these nineteen the special rules, as your punto,[6] your reverso, your stoccata, your imbroccato, your passada, your montanto; till they could all play very near, or altogether as well as myself. This done, say the enemy were forty thousand strong, we twenty would come into the field the tenth of March, or thereabouts; and we would challenge twenty of the enemy; they could not in their honour refuse us: Well, we would kill them; challenge twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them too; and thus would we kill every man his twenty a day, that's twenty score; twenty score, that's two hundred;[7] two hun-

[6] *I would teach these nineteen the special rules, as your* punto, &c.] The terms that follow are adopted from the fencing schools of the author's days; and are enumerated, nearly in the same manner, by Shakspeare and others. They are, as the reader sees, pure Italian; and, being significant in that language, we may regret the perversity of fashion, which, under Charles II. discarded them for the vague, ill sounding foppery of France. *Imbroccato* (the only one which requires an explanation) is a thrust in tierce.

[7] *Twenty score, that's two hundred.*] Bobadill does not do justice to the prowess of himself, and his brothers in arms. Twenty score are four hundred, so that the enemy would be killed up in half the time which he allows for it, or one hundred days. This error in computation runs through all the editions, so that it was probably intended. Indeed Bobadill is too much of a borrower to be an accurate reckoner: but I will not affirm that the author had this in his thoughts. After all, it must be admitted that our old dramatists (or their printers) were very indifferent arithmeticians in general; they seldom escape well from a calculation. On Bobadill's phrase of *killed up*, it may just be observed, that *off*, *out*, and *up*, are continually used by the purest and most excellent of our old writers, after verbs of destroying, consuming, eating, drinking, &c.: to us, who are less conversant with the power of

Digitized by Google

dred a day, five days a thousand; forty thousand; forty times five, five times forty, two hundred days kills them all up by computation. And this will I venture my poor gentleman-like carcase to perform, provided there be no treason practised upon us, by fair and discreet manhood; that is, civilly by the sword.

E. Know. Why, are you so sure of your hand, captain, at all times?

Bob. Tut! never miss thrust, upon my reputation with you.

E. Know. I would not stand in Downright's state then, an you meet him, for the wealth of any one street in London.

Bob. Why, sir, you mistake me: if he were here now, by this welkin, I would not draw my weapon on him. Let this gentleman do his mind: but I will bastinado him, by the bright sun, wherever I meet him.

Mat. Faith, and I'll have a fling at him, at my distance.

E. Know. Ods so, look where he is! yonder he goes. [DOWNRIGHT *crosses the stage.*

Down. What peevish luck have I, I cannot meet with these bragging rascals?

Bob. It is not he, is it?

E. Know. Yes faith, it is he.

Mat. I'll be hang'd then if that were he.

language, they appear, indeed, somewhat like expletives; but they undoubtedly contributed something to the force, and something to the roundness of the sentence. There is much wretched criticism on a similar expression in Shakspeare. "Wo'ot *drink up* eisel?" Theobald gives the sense of the passage in a clumsy note; Hanmer, who had more taste than judgment, and more judgment than knowledge, corrupts the language, as usual; Steevens gaily perverts the sense; and Malone, with great effort brings the reader back to the meaning which poor Theobald had long before excogitated. The grammatical construction of the phrase none of them appear to understand.

Digitized by Google

E. Know. Sir, keep your hanging good for some greater matter, for I assure you that was he.

Step. Upon my reputation, it was he.

Bob. Had I thought it had been he, he must not have gone so: but I can hardly be induced to believe it was he yet.

E. Know. That I think, sir.

Re-enter DOWNWRIGHT.

But see, he is come again.

Down. O, Pharaoh's foot, have I found you? Come, draw to your tools; draw, gipsy, or I'll thrash you.

Bob. Gentleman of valour, I do believe in thee; hear me——

Down. Draw your weapon then.

Bob. Tall man, I never thought on it till now[8] ——Body of me, I had a warrant of the peace served on me, even now as I came along, by a water-bearer; this gentleman saw it, master Mathew.

Down. 'Sdeath! you will not draw then?

[*Disarms and beats him.* MATHEW *runs away.*

Bob. Hold, hold! under thy favour forbear!

Down. Prate again, as you like this, you whoreson foist you! You'll control the point, you![9]

[8] *Bob.* Tall man, *I never thought on it till now.*] Downright is described, to be a tall man, or else the fears of master Mathew misrepresented him as such. But the words *tall*, in this place, were not designed to give us an idea of his height or bulk. Our ancestors used *tall* in the sense of bold, or courageous: and this, I apprehend, is the meaning we must assign it here: thus the Lord Bacon tells us, "that bishop Fox caused his castle of Norham to "be fortified; and mann'd it likewise with a very great number "of *tall* soldiers." *Hist. of Henry* VII. WHAL.

I have abridged Whalley's elaborate note. There is scarcely a writer of Jonson's age who does not frequently use *tall* in the sense of bold or courageous; and even the next page but two to this affords two instances, where it can possibly have no other meaning.

[9] *You'll* control the point, *you!*] To *control the point*, is to

Digitized by Google

Your consort is gone; had he staid he had shared with you, sir. [*Exit.*

Bob. Well, gentlemen, bear witness, I was bound to the peace, by this good day.

E. Know. No, faith, it's an ill day, captain, never reckon it other: but, say you were bound to the peace, the law allows you to defend yourself: that will prove but a poor excuse.

Bob. I cannot tell, sir;[1] I desire good construction in fair sort. I never sustain'd the like disgrace, by heaven! sure I was struck with a planet thence,[2] for I had no power to touch my weapon.

bear, or beat it down: Downright retorts his own words upon the poor baffled captain: But the expression is technical; thus, the Bravo in the *Antiquary*, says, "I do it by a slight, and by that I can *control any man's point whatever*."

[1] *I cannot tell.*] i. e. I know not what to say, or think, of it. So in *Cupid's Revenge*,

3 *Cit. I cannot tell;* methinks if men were men,
'Twere no great matter.

I should not have noticed this simple expression, of which I could give innumerable instances, were it not for the sake of observing that the commentators on Shakspeare have mistaken it. In *Henry IV.* Falstaff says to the chief justice, "Your ill angel is light; but I hope he that looks upon me, will take me without weighing: and yet, in some respects, I grant, I cannot go; *I cannot tell;* virtue, &c." On which Jonson, with whom all the rest agree, says, "I cannot *tell;* i. e. I cannot be taken in a reckoning, I cannot pass current. Nothing can be more incorrect: it means, as I have already remarked, I cannot tell what to say or think of it; and nothing more. As Beaumont and Fletcher are now before me, I will produce a decisive instance from them.

Bessus. "As for my own part, I was dangerously hurt but three days before; else, perhaps, we had been two to two; *I cannot tell;* some thought we had." *King and no King.*

[2] *Sure I was* struck with a planet *thence.*] Warton says that when Jonson makes Bobadill tamely submit to a beating, and with characteristical humour and readiness of invention, accounts for it by declaring that he was *planet-struck*, he indirectly intended to ridicule the prevailing fondness for astrology. "At least," continues he, "without considering the popular superstitions about the influence of the planets, Bobadill's pretence is forced, unnatural, and almost unintelligible."

Digitized by Google

E. Know. Ay, like enough; I have heard of many that have been beaten under a planet: go, get you to a surgeon. 'Slid! an these be your tricks, your passados, and your montantos. I'll none of them. [*Exit* BOBADILL.] O, manners! that this age should bring forth such creatures! that nature should be at leisure to make them! Come, coz.

Step. Mass, I'll have this cloak.

E. Know. Ods will, 'tis Downright's.

Step. Nay, it's mine now, another might have ta'en it up as well as I; I'll wear it, so I will.

E. Know. How an he see it? he'll challenge it, assure yourself.

Step. Ay, but he shall not have it: I'll say I bought it.

E. Know. Take heed you buy it not too dear, coz.

[*Exeunt.*

It is, indeed, to be feared that much of the merit of Jonson is lost to us, through our ignorance of the sources of his humour, and the precise objects of his satire; but this misfortune he shares (though, perhaps, in a greater degree) with his contemporaries, who are all sufferers from the same causes. Undoubtedly the prompt excuse of Bobadill created no little mirth, among those to whom the language was familiar. Warton believes that the ridicule was levelled at the professors of astrology; but there was another profession, very obnoxious to wanton merriment in those days, and full as likely to be aimed at, I mean, that of physic. This noble art has always had its jargon, and its fashionable diseases: it seems to have escaped Warton that *planet-stricken* was then the term in vogue for any sudden attack for which the physician could not readily find a proper name. In some *Observations on the Bills of Mortality*, by Captain John Grant, (printed before the middle of the seventeenth century,) he observes, p. 26, that "it is enough if the searchers give the most predominant symptoms; as, that one died of the head-ach, who was sorely tormented with it, though the disease might be in the stomach. Again, if one died *suddenly*, the matter is not great, whether it be reported in the bills, *Suddenly*, *apoplexy*, or *planet-strucken*.—And, a few pages afterwards, in "*An Account of the Diseases, and Casualties of this year, being* 1632," he gives, "apoplex and meagrim, seventeen; *Planet-struck*, thirteen; suddenly, sixty-two."

Digitized by Google

SCENE VI. *A Room in* KITELY'S *House.*

Enter KITELY, WELLBRED, *Dame* KITELY, *and* BRIDGET.

Kitely.

NOW, trust me, brother, you were much to blame,
T'incense his anger, and disturb the peace
Of my poor house, where there are centinels,
That every minute watch to give alarms
Of civil war, without adjection
Of your assistance or occasion.

Wel. No harm done, brother, I warrant you: Since there is no harm done, anger costs a man nothing; and a tall man is never his own man till he be angry. To keep his valour in obscurity, is to keep himself as it were in a cloak-bag. What's a musician, unless he play? What's a tall man unless he fight? For, indeed, all this my wise brother stands upon absolutely; and that made me fall in with him so resolutely.

Dame K. Ay, but what harm might have come of it, brother?

Wel. Might, sister? so might the good warm clothes your husband wears be poisoned, for any thing he knows; or the wholesome wine he drank, even now at the table.

Kit. Now, God forbid! O me! now I remember
My wife drank to me last, and changed the cup,
And bade me wear this cursed suit to day.
See, if Heaven suffer murder undiscover'd!
I feel me ill; give me some mithridate,
Some mithridate and oil, good sister fetch me;
O, I am sick at heart! I burn, I burn.
If you will save my life, go, fetch it me.

Digitized by Google

Wel. O strange humour! my very breath has poison'd him.

Brid. Good brother be content, what do you mean? The strength of these extreme conceits will kill you.

Dame K. Beshrew your heart-blood, brother Wellbred, now,
For putting such a toy into his head!

Wel. Is a fit simile a toy? will he be poison'd with a simile? Brother Kitely, what a strange and idle imagination is this? For shame, be wiser. O' my soul there's no such matter.

Kit. Am I not sick? how am I then not poison'd? Am I not poison'd? how am I then so sick?

Dame K. If you be sick, your own thoughts make you sick.

Wel. His jealousy is the poison he has taken.

Enter BRAINWORM *disguised in* FORMAL'S *clothes.*

Brai. Master Kitely, my master, justice Clement, salutes you; and desires to speak with you with all possible speed.

Kit. No time but now, when I think I am sick, very sick! well, I will wait upon his worship. Thomas! Cob! I must seek them out, and set them sentinels till I return. Thomas! Cob! Thomas! [*Exit.*

Wel. This is perfectly rare, Brainworm; [*Takes him aside.*] but how got'st thou this apparel of the justice's man?

Brai. Marry sir, my proper fine pen-man would needs bestow the grist on me, at the Windmill, to hear some martial discourse; where I so marshall'd him, that I made him drunk with admiration: and, because too much heat was the cause of his distemper, I stript him stark naked as he lay along asleep, and borrowed his suit to deliver this counterfeit message in, leaving a rusty armour, and an old brown

Digitized by Google

bill to watch him till my return; which shall be, when I have pawn'd his apparel, and spent the better part o' the money, perhaps.

Wel. Well, thou art a successful merry knave, Brainworm: his absence will be a good subject for more mirth. I pray thee, return to thy young master, and will him to meet me and my sister Bridget at the Tower instantly; for, here, tell him the house is so stored with jealousy, there is no room for love to stand upright in. We must get our fortunes committed to some larger prison, say; and than the Tower, I know no better air,[3] nor where the liberty of the house may do us more present service. Away.

[*Exit* BRAI.

Re-enter KITELY, *talking aside to* CASH.

Kit. Come hither, Thomas. Now, my secret's ripe,
And thou shalt have it: lay to both thine ears.
Hark, what I say to thee. I must go forth, Thomas;
Be careful of thy promise, keep good watch,
Note every gallant, and observe him well,
That enters in my absence to thy mistress:
If she would shew him rooms, the jest is stale,
Follow them Thomas, or else hang on him,
And let him not go after; mark their looks;
Note if she offer but to see his band,
Or any other amorous toy about him;
But praise his leg, or foot; or if she say
The day is hot, and bid him feel her hand,

[3] *And than the* Tower *I know no better air*, &c.] As the Tower was extra-parochial, it probably afforded some facility to private marriages. To this Wellbred seems to allude; and indeed the circumstance is frequently noted in our old comedies: So in a *Match at Midnight:* "She will go with you to your lodging, lie there all night, and be *married* in the morning at the *Tower*, as soon as you shall please." A. iv. S. 1.

Digitized by Google

How hot it is; O, that's a monstrous thing!
Note me all this, good Thomas, mark their sighs,
And, if they do but whisper, break 'em off:
I'll bear thee out in it. Wilt thou do this?
Wilt thou be true, my Thomas?

Cash. As truth's self, sir.

Kit. Why, I believe thee: Where is Cob, now? Cob! [*Exit.*

Dame K. He's ever calling for Cob: I wonder how he employs Cob so.

Wel. Indeed sister, to ask how he employs Cob, is a necessary question for you that are his wife, and a thing not very easy for you to be satisfied in; but this I'll assure you, Cob's wife is an excellent bawd, sister, and oftentimes your husband haunts her house; marry, to what end? I cannot altogether accuse him; imagine you what you think convenient: but I have known fair hides have foul hearts ere now, sister.

Dame K. Never said you truer than that, brother, so much I can tell you for your learning. Thomas, fetch your cloak and go with me, [*Exit* CASH.] I'll after him presently: I would to fortune I could take him there, i'faith, I'd return him his own, I warrant him! [*Exit.*

Wel. So, let 'em go; this may make sport anon. Now, my fair sister-in-law, that you knew but how happy a thing it were to be fair and beautiful.

Brid. That touches not me, brother.

Wel. That's true; that's even the fault of it: for indeed, beauty stands a woman in no stead, unless it procure her touching.—But, sister, whether it touch you or no, it touches your beauties; and I am sure, they will abide the touch; an they do not, a plague of all ceruse, say I![4] and it touches me too in part,

[4] *A plague of all* ceruse, *say I!*] *Ceruse* (from *cerussa*, Lat.) a

Digitized by Google

though not in the —— Well, there's a dear and respected friend of mine, sister, stands very strongly and worthily affected toward you, and hath vowed to inflame whole bonfires of zeal at his heart, in honour of your perfections. I have already engaged my promise to bring you, where you shall hear him confirm much more. Ned Knowell is the man, sister: there's no exception against the party. You are ripe for a husband; and a minute's loss to such an occasion, is a great trespass in a wise beauty. What say you, sister? On my soul he loves you; will you give him the meeting?

Brid. Faith I had very little confidence in mine own constancy, brother, if I durst not meet a man: but this motion of your's savours of an old knight adventurer's servant a little too much, methinks.

Wel. What's that, sister?

Brid. Marry, of the squire.[5]

Wel. No matter if it did, I would be such an one for my friend. But, see, who is return'd to hinder us!

Re-enter KITELY.

Kit. What villainy is this? call'd out on a false message!
This was some plot; I was not sent for.—Bridget,
Where is your sister?

Brid. I think she be gone forth, sir.

composition of white lead with which the ladies painted their face and bosom. WHAL.

This is certainly the *ceruse* of the Romans; whether that of our fair countrywomen was equally deleterious, I cannot say. It is mentioned by them without reserve, and applied without caution; and appears to have been not altogether colourless.

[5] *Marry, of the* squire.] A cant term for a pimp or procurer. Thus, in *A Mad World my Masters;*

"This censure flies from one, that, from another;
"That man's her *squire*, says he; her *pimp*, the other."

Digitized by Google

Kit. How! is my wife gone forth? whither, for God's sake?

Brid. She's gone abroad with Thomas.

Kit. Abroad with Thomas! oh, that villain dors me:[6]

He hath discover'd all unto my wife.
Beast that I was, to trust him! whither, I pray you,
Went she?

Brid. I know not, sir.

Wel. I'll tell you, brother,
Whither I suspect she's gone.

Kit. Whither, good brother?

Wel. To Cob's house, I believe: but, keep my counsel.

Kit. I will, I will: to Cob's house! doth she haunt Cob's?

She's gone a purpose now to cuckold me,
With that lewd rascal, who, to win her favour,
Hath told her all. [*Exit.*

Wel. Come, he is once more gone,
Sister, let's lose no time; the affair is worth it.

[*Exeunt.*

[6] *Oh that villain* dors *me.*] The *dor* is the chaffer; and the allusion, to which Jonson is never weary of recurring, is to the desultory flight of this insect, which appears to *mock*, or *play upon*, the passenger, by striking him on the face, and then flitting away preparatory, as it were, to a fresh attack. To this Cowley alludes: "A hundred businesses of other men fly continually about his head and ears, and strike him in the face like *dorres*." *Essays, of Liberty.* Jonson always connects the idea of tricking, or outwitting, with *dorring*. *Buzzing*, the prevailing term for deceiving, in Addison's days, as well as that most hateful vulgarism, *humming*, so fashionable in our own, derived its origin from the same respectable source, and both refer to this imaginary mockery in the "droning flight" of the beetle.

Digitized by Google

SCENE VII. *A Street.*

Enter MATHEW, *and* BOBADILL.

Mathew.

I WONDER, captain, what they will say of my going away, ha?

Bob. Why, what should they say, but as of a discreet gentleman; quick, wary, respectful of nature's fair lineaments? and that's all.

Mat. Why so! but what can they say of your beating?

Bob. A rude part, a touch with soft wood, a kind of gross battery used, laid on strongly, borne most patiently; and that's all.

Mat. Ay, but would any man have offered it in Venice, as you say?

Bob. Tut! I assure you, no: you shall have there your nobilis, your gentilezza, come in bravely upon your reverse, stand you close, stand you firm, stand you fair, save your retricato with his left leg, come to the assalto with the right, thrust with brave steel, defy your base wood! But wherefore do I awake this remembrance? I was fascinated, by Jupiter; fascinated; but I will be unwitch'd, and revenged by law.

Mat. Do you hear? is it not best to get a warrant, and have him arrested and brought before justice Clement?

Bob. It were not amiss; would we had it!

Enter BRAINWORM *disguised as* FORMAL.

Mat. Why, here comes his man; let's speak to him.

Bob. Agreed, do you speak.

Mat. Save you, sir!

Brai. With all my heart, sir.

Mat. Sir, there is one Downright hath abused this

Digitized by Google

gentleman and myself, and we determine to make our amends by law; now, if you would do us the favour to procure a warrant, to bring him afore your master, you shall be well considered, I assure you, sir.

Brai. Sir, you know my service is my living; such favours as these gotten of my master is his only preferment, and therefore you must consider me as I may make benefit of my place.

Mat. How is that, sir?

Brai. Faith, sir, the thing is extraordinary, and the gentleman may be of great account; yet, be he what he will, if you will lay me down a brace of angels in my hand you shall have it, otherwise not.

Mat. How shall we do, captain? he asks a brace of angels, you have no money?

Bob. Not a cross, by fortune.[7]

Mat. Nor I, as I am a gentleman, but twopence left of my two shillings in the morning for wine and radish: let's find him some pawn.

Bob. Pawn! we have none to the value of his demand.

Mat. O, yes; I'll pawn this jewel in my ear,[8] and

[7] *Not a* cross, *by fortune.*] The ancient penny, according to Stow, had a double cross with a crest stamped on it, so that it might easily be broken in the midst, or in the four quarters. Hence it became a common phrase when a person had no money about him, to say, he had not a *single cross*. As this was certainly an *unfortunate* circumstance, there is no end to the quibbling upon this poor word. Thus Shakspeare, vir gregis ipse caper.——"I had rather bear with you than bear you; yet I should bear no *cross* if I did bear you; for I think you have no *money* in your purse." *As you like it.* A. ii. S. 4.

[8] *I'll pawn this jewel in my ear.*] A fashion at that time for the men to wear rings in their ears. So in the Induction to *Every Man out of his Humour*,

"———— Hang my richest words

"As polish'd *jewels* in their bounteous *ears*."

And in the *Revenger's Tragedy*, A. i. S. 1.

"That *jewel's* mine that quivers in his ear." WHAL.

Digitized by Google

you may pawn your silk-stockings, and pull up your boots, they will ne'er be mist: it must be done now.

Bob. Well, an there be no remedy, I'll step aside and pull them off. [*Withdraws.*

Mat. Do you hear, sir? we have no store of money at this time, but you shall have good pawns; look you, sir, this jewel, and that gentleman's silk stockings; because we would have it dispatch'd ere we went to our chambers.

Brai. I am content, sir; I will get you the warrant presently. What's his name, say you? Downright?

Mat. Ay, ay, George Downright.

Brai. What manner of man is he?

Mat. A tall big man, sir; he goes in a cloak most commonly of silk-russet, laid about with russet lace.

Brai. 'Tis very good, sir.

Mat. Here, sir, here's my jewel.

Bob. [*returning.*] And here are my stockings.

Brai. Well, gentlemen, I'll procure you this warrant presently; but who will you have to serve it?

Mat. That's true, captain; that must be consider'd.

Bob. Body o' me, I know not; 'tis service of danger.

Brai. Why, you were best get one o' the varlets of the city,[9] a serjeant: I'll appoint you one, if you please.

Mat. Will you, sir? why, we can wish no better.

Bob. We'll leave it to you, sir.

[*Exeunt* BOB. *and* MAT.

Brai. This is rare! Now will I go pawn this cloak of the justice's man's at the broker's, for a varlet's suit, and be the varlet myself; and get either more pawns, or more money of Downright, for the arrest.

[*Exit.*

[9] *One of the* varlets *of the city.*] *Varlet*, a servant, was the name then given to the bailiffs, or serjeants at mace, belonging to the city counters. The word is so common in this sense that I shall forbear to state any particular instance of it.

Digitized by Google

SCENE VIII. *The Lane before* COB'S *House.*

Enter KNOWELL.

Knowell.

OH, here it is; I am glad I have found it now:
Ho! who is within here?

Tib. [*within*] I am within, sir; what's your pleasure?

Know. To know who is within besides yourself.

Tib. Why, sir, you are no constable, I hope?

Know. O, fear you the constable? then I doubt not,
You have some guests within deserve that fear;
I'll fetch him straight.

Enter TIB.

Tib. O' God's name, sir!

Know. Go to: Come, tell me, is not young Knowell here?

Tib. Young Knowell! I know none such, sir, o' mine honesty.

Know. Your honesty, dame! it flies too lightly from you;
There is no way but fetch the constable.

Tib. The constable! the man is mad, I think.

[*Exit, and claps to the door.*

Enter dame KITELY *and* CASH.

Cash. Ho! who keeps house here?

Know. O, this is the female copesmate of my son:
Now shall I meet him straight.

Dame K. Knock, Thomas, hard.

Cash. Ho, goodwife!

Re-enter TIB.

Tib. Why, what's the matter with you?

Digitized by Google

Dame K. Why woman, grieves it you to ope your door?
Belike you get something to keep it shut.
Tib. What mean these questions, pray ye?
Dame K. So strange you make it! is not my husband here?
Know. Her husband!
Dame K. My tried husband, master Kitely?
Tib. I hope he needs not to be tried here.
Dame K. No, dame, he does it not for need, but pleasure.
Tib. Neither for need nor pleasure is he here.
Know. This is but a device to baulk me withal:

Enter KITELY, *muffled in his cloak.*

Soft, who is this? 'tis not my son disguised?
Dame K. [*spies her husband, and runs to him.*]
O, sir, have I forestall'd your honest market,
Found your close walks? You stand amazed now, do you?
I'faith, I am glad I have smok'd you yet at last.
What is your jewel, trow? In, come, let's see her;
Fetch forth your housewife, dame; if she be fairer,
In any honest judgment, than myself,
I'll be content with it: but she is change,
She feeds you fat, she sooths your appetite,
And you are well! Your wife, an honest woman,
Is meat twice sod to you, sir! O, you treachour![1]

[1] *O, you* treachour!] Treachour, for traitor is common to our old writers; so in Chaucer's *Romance of the Rose*,

"Of all this worlde is emperour
"Gile my father, the false *treachour*." v. 7168.

And Spenser,

——"Hence shall I never rest
"Till I that *treachour's* art have heard and tryde."
F. Q. l. 1. c. ix. st. 32.

And in Shakspeare, "Knaves, thieves, and *treachours*, by spherical predominance." *Lear*, A. i. S. 2. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

Know. She cannot counterfeit thus palpably.
Kit. Out on thy more than strumpet impudence!
Steal'st thou thus to thy haunts? and have I taken
Thy bawd and thee, and thy companion,
This hoary-headed letcher, this old goat,
Close at your villainy, and would'st thou 'scuse it
With this stale harlot's jest, accusing me?
O, old incontinent, [*to* KNOWELL.] dost thou not shame,
When all thy powers in chastity are spent,
To have a mind so hot?[2] and to entice,
And feed the enticements of a lustful woman?
Dame K. Out, I defy thee, I, dissembling wretch!
Kit. Defy me, strumpet! Ask thy pander here,[3]
Can he deny it? or that wicked elder?
Know. Why, hear you, sir.
Kit. Tut, tut, tut; never speak:
Thy guilty conscience will discover thee.

[2] ——————*dost thou not shame,*
When all thy powers in chastity *are spent,*
To have a mind so hot?] i. e. "when thy powers for legitimate pleasures are exhausted, &c." There seems no great obscurity in this; yet Whalley appears to have stumbled at it: He wishes to adopt a conjecture of Mr. Waldron. In the quarto, the words, which stand asunder in the folio, are joined, and appear as one, *inchastitie.* This, Mr. Waldron conceives to be a misprint for inchastilie, "a reading," (he says,) "which greatly improves the sense of the passage." I do not think so:—but let the reader judge. It may be added, however, that though no example will readily be found of inchastilie, the substantive from which it may be derived (*inchastitie*) is sufficiently common. Thus in Hannay's *Sheretine and Mariana:*

"'Tis not the act that ties the marriage knot,
"It is the will: then must I all my life,
"Be stained with *inchastitie's* foul blot."

[3] The folio has a note here "*By Thomas,*" on which Whalley remarks. "This marginal direction is obscure. Thomas Cash is the person meant, he is called her pander, as Knowell is afterwards termed the wicked elder. The words *By Thomas,* mean, that *he comes up to Cash,* when he gives him that appellation."

As Whalley has utterly mistaken the sense, I should not have retained his observation but for the opportunity which it affords

Digitized by Google

Know. What lunacy is this, that haunts this man?
Kit. Well, good wife bawd, Cob's wife, and you,
That make your husband such a hoddy-doddy;
And you, young apple-squire, and old cuckold-maker;

me, of offering a few words on this most trite but disputed mode of expression. In the *Merchant of Venice*, A. ii. S. 9, the Prince of Arragon says.

——— "that many may be meant
"*By* the fool multitude."

On which Mr. Malone observes "I have reason to congratulate myself on having here adhered to the ancient copies, in opposition to the other modern editors, having, since this note was printed, met with many examples of this kind of phraseology. So, in Plutarch's Life of Cæsar, as translated by North, 1575: "—he aunswered, that these fat long-beared men made him not affrayed, but the lean and whitely-faced fellows; *meaning that by* Brutus and Cassius." i. e. meaning by that, &c. Again, in Sir Thomas Moore's Life of Edward the Fifth;—Holinshed, p. 1374: "—that *meant he by the lordes* of the queenes kindred that were taken before," i. e. by that he meant the lordes, &c. Again, *ibidem*, p. 1371: "My lord, quoth Hastings, on my life, never doubt you; for while one man is there,—never can there be, &c. This *meant he by Catesby*, which was of his near secrete counsaile." i. e. by this he meant Catesby, &c.

Again, Puttenham in his *Arte of Poesie*, 1589, p. 157, after citing some enigmatical verses, adds, "—the good old gentleman would tell us that were children, how *it was meant by* a furr'd glove, i. e. a furr'd glove was meant by it, &c."

This long string of examples is given by the Critical Reviewers as a happy explanation of, what they are pleased to call "this *peculiar* expression," though the expression is very common, and the resolution of it wrong in every instance. The plain fact is, (for it needs not many words,) that the prepositions *by* and *of* are synonymous, and that our ancestors used them indifferently as they were well justified in doing: place *of*, therefore, in the stead of *by*, and the mighty difficulty vanishes at once. *By Thomas*, is *of* Thomas, and nothing more. This simple substitution answers in every case, whereas innumerable examples might be produced in which the elaborate inversion recommended above, would resolve the phrase into nonsense. In the admirable speech of the poor persecuted James to his parliament, on the gunpowder plot, he says, I did apprehend some dark phrases therein, to be meant *by*

Digitized by Google

I'll have you every one before a justice:
Nay, you shall answer it, I charge you go.
Know. Marry, with all my heart, sir, I go willingly;
Though I do taste this as a trick put on me,
To punish my impertinent search, and justly,
And half forgive my son for the device.
Kit. Come, will you go?
Dame K. Go! to thy shame, believe it.

Enter COB.

Cob. Why, what's the matter here, what's here to do?
Kit. O, Cob, art thou come? I have been abused,
And in thy house; was never man so wrong'd!
Cob. 'Slid, in my house, my master Kitely! who wrongs you in my house?
Kit. Marry, young lust in old, and old in young here:
Thy wife's their bawd, here have I taken them.
Cob. How, bawd! is my house come to that? Am I preferr'd thither? Did I not charge you to keep your doors shut, Isbel? and—you let them lie open for all comers! [*Beats his wife.*
Know. Friend, know some cause, before thou beat'st thy wife.
This is madness in thee.
Cob. Why, is there no cause?
Kit. Yes, I'll shew cause before the justice, Cob:
Come, let her go with me.

this terrible form of blowing us up by gunpowder." On which the British Critic remarks, "to be meant *by*," is a misprint for "to mean." This is one of those venial slips *quas incuria*, &c.; for few are so intimately acquainted with the language of our ancestors as the editor of that work.

To return to Jonson: this whole scene, as Whalley well observes, is very happily drawn, and altogether in the spirit of the ancient comedy.

Digitized by Google

Cob. Nay, she shall go.

Tib. Nay, I will go. I'll see an you may be allowed to make a bundle of hemp of your right and lawful wife thus, at every cuckoldy knave's pleasure. Why do you not go?

Kit. A bitter quean! Come, we will have you tamed. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX. *A Street.*

Enter BRAINWORM *disguised as a city serjeant.*

Brainworm.

WELL, of all my disguises yet, now am I most like myself, being in this serjeant's gown. A man of my present profession never counterfeits, till he lays hold upon a debtor, and says, he rests him; for then he brings him to all manner of unrest. A kind of little kings we are, bearing the diminutive of a mace,[4] made like a young arti-

[4] *Bearing the diminutive of a* mace, &c.] This was the badge of a city serjeant's office, which he constantly carried when he arrested a man for debt. Thus Shirley, "Are you in debt, and fear arresting? You shall come up to the face of a serjeant, nay, walk by a shoal of these mankind horse-leeches, and be *mace proof*." *Bird in a Cage*, A. ii. And Chapman,

"If I write but my name in a mercer's book,
"I am as sure to have, at six month's end,
"A rascal at my elbow with a *mace*." *All Fools*, A. i.

The *gown* too was a badge of the serjeant's or *varlet's* office, and as well known as the mace; indeed, he never appeared in public without it: to this Brainworm alludes, when he says, "a man of my present profession *never counterfeits*."

Though there is something coarse and rude in the following remarks, yet they are not altogether unworthy of notice. "How chances it that our bailiffs have departed from the antient practice in all civilized countries, of wearing the livery or badge of their employment. The *varlets* and *serjeants*, as they were called

Digitized by Google

choke, that always carries pepper and salt in itself. Well, I know not what danger I undergo by this exploit; pray heaven I come well off!

Enter MATHEW *and* BOBADILL.

Mat. See, I think, yonder is the varlet, by his gown.

Bob. Let's go in quest of him.

Mat. 'Save you, friend! are not you here by appointment of justice Clement's man?

Brai. Yes, an't please you, sir; he told me, two gentlemen had will'd him to procure a warrant from his master, which I have about me, to be served on one Downright.

Mat. It is honestly done of you both; and see where the party comes you must arrest; serve it upon him quickly, afore he be aware.

Bob. Bear back, master Mathew.

Enter STEPHEN *in* DOWNRIGHT'S *cloak.*

Brai. Master Downright, I arrest you in the queen's name, and must carry you afore a justice by virtue of this warrant.

Step. Me, friend! I am no Downright, I; I am master Stephen: You do not well to arrest me, I

formerly, were distinguished by their habit: they used "no counterfeits," says Ben Jonson. It appears beneath the dignity of the law that they should: no part of justice, I humbly conceive, ought to be acted in masquerade—that would be to make mummers of its inferior ministers; dangerous mummers indeed! for they pass now in all manner of disguises, and instead of the 'mace,' the sober symbol of civil power, parade it with bludgeons and concealed weapons. This is notorious; yet no lawyer can be found who has honesty enough to declare the practice illegal. It is argued that they could not so readily act in a known habit, as they would be liable to interruption, and abuse. Is not the law strong enough to support itself? Besides, who shall dare to insult or oppose the avowed and liveried officer of justice in the execution of his duty." *Speculations on Law*, 1788.

Digitized by Google

tell you truly; I am in no body's bonds nor books, I would you should know it. A plague on you heartily, for making me thus afraid afore my time!

Brai. Why, now you are deceived, gentlemen.

Bob. He wears such a cloak, and that deceived us: but see, here a'comes indeed; this is he, officer.

Enter DOWNRIGHT.

Down. Why how now, signior gull! are you turn'd filcher of late? Come, deliver my cloak.

Step. Your cloak, sir! I bought it even now, in open market.

Brai. Master Downright, I have a warrant I must serve upon you, procured by these two gentlemen.

Down. These gentlemen? these rascals!

[*Offers to beat them.*

Brai. Keep the peace, I charge you in her majesty's name.

Down. I obey thee. What must I do, officer?

Brai. Go before master justice Clement, to answer what they can object against you, sir: I will use you kindly, sir.

Mat. Come, let's before, and make the justice,[5] captain.

Bob. The varlet's a tall man, afore heaven![6]

[*Exeunt* BOB. *and* MAT.

Down. Gull, you'll give me my cloak?

Step. Sir, I bought it, and I'll keep it.

Down. You will?

[5] *Come let's before and* make *the justice.*] i. e. acquaint him with our business; or, as the quarto reads, in this place, *prepare* him. The same expression is found in Sejanus, "Were Lygdus *made*, that's done."

[6] Bob. *The* varlet's a tall man, *afore heaven!*] There is some natural humour in making Bobadill, who had suffered from Downright's courage, celebrate the *prowess* of the *serjeant* a (legal officer) in venturing to arrest him.

Digitized by Google

Step. Ay, that I will.

Down. Officer, there's thy fee, arrest him.

Brai. Master Stephen, I must arrest you.

Step. Arrest me! I scorn it. There, take your cloak, I'll none on't.

Down. Nay, that shall not serve your turn now, sir. Officer, I'll go with thee to the justice's; bring him along.

Step. Why, is not here your cloak? what would you have?

Down. I'll have you answer it, sir.

Brai. Sir, I'll take your word, and this gentleman's too, for his appearance.

Down. I'll have no words taken: bring him along.

Brai. Sir, I may choose to do that, I may take bail.

Down. 'Tis true, you may take bail, and choose at another time; but you shall not now, varlet: bring him along, or I'll swinge you.

Brai. Sir, I pity the gentleman's case: here's your money again.

Down. 'Sdeins, tell not me of my money; bring him away, I say.

Brai. I warrant you he will go with you of himself, sir.

Down. Yet more ado?

Brai. I have made a fair mash on't. [*Aside.*

Step. Must I go?

Brai. I know no remedy, master Stephen.

Down. Come along, afore me here; I do not love your hanging look behind.

Step. Why, sir, I hope you cannot hang me for it: can he, fellow?

Brai. I think not, sir; it is but a whipping matter, sure.

Step. Why then let him do his worst, I am resolute. [*Exeunt.*

Digitized by Google

ACT V.

SCENE I. Coleman Street. *A Hall in justice* CLEMENT'S *House.*

Enter CLEMENT, KNOWELL, KITELY, *dame* KITELY, TIB, CASH, COB, *and* Servants.

Clement.

NAY, but stay, stay, give me leave: my chair, sirrah. You, Master Knowell, say you went thither to meet your son?

Know. Ay, sir.

Clem. But who directed you thither?

Know. That did mine own man, sir.

Clem. Where is he?

Know. Nay, I know not now; I left him with your clerk, and appointed him to stay here for me.

Clem. My clerk! about what time was this?

Know. Marry, between one and two, as I take it.

Clem. And what time came my man with the false message to you, master Kitely?

Kit. After two, sir.

Clem. Very good: but, mistress Kitely, how chance that you were at Cob's, ha?

Dame K. An't please you, sir, I'll tell you: my brother Wellbred told me, that Cob's house was a suspected place——

Clem. So it appears, methinks; but on.

Dame K. And that my husband used thither daily.

Clem. No matter, so he used himself well, mistress.

Digitized by Google

Dame K. True, sir; but you know what grows by such haunts oftentimes.

Clem. I see rank fruits of a jealous brain, mistress Kitely: but did you find your husband there, in that case as you suspected?

Kit. I found her there, sir.

Clem. Did you so! that alters the case. Who gave you knowledge of your wife's being there?

Kit. Marry, that did my brother Wellbred.

Clem. How, Wellbred first tell her; then tell you after! Where is Wellbred?

Kit. Gone with my sister, sir, I know not whither.

Clem. Why, this is a mere trick, a device; you are gull'd in this most grossly, all. Alas, poor wench! wert thou beaten for this?

Tib. Yes, most pitifully, an't please you.

Cob. And worthily, I hope, if it shall prove so.

Clem. Ay, that's like, and a piece of a sentence.—

Enter a Servant.

How now, sir! what's the matter?

Serv. Sir, there's a gentleman in the court without, desires to speak with your worship.

Clem. A gentleman! what is he?

Serv. A soldier, sir, he says.

Clem. A soldier! take down my armour, my sword quickly. A soldier speak with me! Why, when, knaves?[7] Come on, come on; [*Arms himself.*] hold my cap there, so; give me my gorget, my

[7] *Why,* when, *knaves?*] This exclamatory mark of impatience is extremely common in our old dramatists; and I am, therefore, somewhat surprised to find it escape the notice of Reed. In the *Spanish Tragedy*, the viceroy exclaims,

"No more, I say; to the tortures: *when!*
"Bind him, and burn his body."—

Dodsley, no very competent judge of language, altered *when*, to *with him!* and Reed approves and continues the corruption.

Digitized by Google

sword: stand by, I will end your matters anon—— Let the soldier enter. [*Exit* Servant.

Enter BOBADILL *followed by* MATHEW.

Now, sir, what have you to say to me?

Bob. By your worship's favour——

Clem. Nay, keep out, sir; I know not your pretence. You send me word, sir, you are a soldier: why, sir, you shall be answer'd here; here be them have been amongst soldiers. Sir, your pleasure.

Bob. Faith, sir, so it is, this gentleman and myself have been most uncivilly wrong'd and beaten by one Downright, a coarse fellow, about the town here; and for mine own part, I protest, being a man in no sort given to this filthy humour of quarrelling, he hath assaulted me in the way of my peace, despoiled me of mine honour, disarmed me of my weapons, and rudely laid me along in the open streets, when I not so much as once offered to resist him.

Clem. O, God's precious! is this the soldier? Here, take my armour off quickly, 'twill make him swoon, I fear; he is not fit to look on't, that will put up a blow.

Mat. An't please your worship, he was bound to the peace.

Clem. Why, an he were, sir, his hands were not bound, were they?

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. There's one of the varlets of the city, sir, has brought two gentlemen here; one, upon your worship's warrant.

Clem. My warrant!

Serv. Yes, sir; the officer says, procured by these two.

Clem. Bid him come in. [*Exit* Servant.] Set by this picture.

Digitized by Google

Enter DOWNRIGHT, STEPHEN, *and* BRAINWORM *disguised as before.*

What, master Downright! are you brought at master Fresh-water's suit here?

Dow. I'faith, sir: and here's another brought at my suit.

Clem. What are you, sir?

Step. A gentleman, sir. O, uncle!

Clem. Uncle! who, master Knowell?

Know. Ay, sir; this is a wise kinsman of mine.

Step. God's my witness, uncle, I am wrong'd here monstrously; he charges me with stealing of his cloak, and would I might never stir, if I did not find it in the street by chance.

Down. O, did you find it now? You said you bought it ere-while.

Step. And you said, I stole it: nay, now my uncle is here, I'll do well enough with you.

Clem. Well, let this breathe a while. You that have cause to complain there, stand forth: Had you my warrant for this gentleman's apprehension?

Bob. Ay, an't please your worship.

Clem. Nay, do not speak in passion so:[8] where had you it?

Bob. Of your clerk, sir.

Clem. That's well! an my clerk can make warrants, and my hand not at them! Where is the warrant—officer, have you it?

Brai. No, sir, your worship's man, master Formal, bid me do it for these gentlemen, and he would be my discharge.

Clem. Why, master Downright, are you such a novice, to be served and never see the warrant?

[8] *Nay, do not speak in* passion *so.*] i. e. in so melancholy a tone, so pathetically. Poor Bobadill has now been sufficiently humbled.

Digitized by Google

Down. Sir, he did not serve it on me.

Clem. No! how then?

Down. Marry, sir, he came to me, and said he must serve it, and he would use me kindly, and so——

Clem. O God's pity, was it so, sir? *He must serve it!* Give me my long sword there, and help me off. So, come on, sir varlet, I *must* cut off your legs, sirrah; [*Brainworm kneels.*] nay, stand up, *I'll use you kindly;* I *must* cut off your legs, I say.

[*Flourishes over him with his long sword.*

Brai. O, good sir, I beseech you; nay, good master justice!

Clem. I must do it, there is no remedy; I *must* cut off your legs, sirrah, I *must* cut off your ears, you rascal, I must do it; I *must* cut off your nose, I *must* cut off your head.

Brai. O, good your worship!

Clem. Well, rise; how dost thou do now? dost thou feel thyself well? hast thou no harm?

Brai. No, I thank your good worship, sir.

Clem. Why, so! I said I must cut off thy legs, and I must cut off thy arms, and I must cut off thy head; but I did not do it: so you said you must serve this gentleman with my warrant, but you did not serve him. You knave, you slave, you rogue, do you say you *must*, sirrah! away with him to the jail; I'll teach you a trick, for your *must*, sir.

Brai. Good sir, I beseech you, be good to me.

Clem. Tell him he shall to the jail; away with him, I say.

Brai. Nay, sir, if you will commit me, it shall be for committing more than this: I will not lose by my travail any grain of my fame, certain. [*Throws off his serjeant's gown.*]

Clem. How is this?

Know. My man Brainworm!

Digitized by Google

Step. O, yes, uncle; Brainworm has been with my cousin Edward and I all this day.

Clem. I told you all there was some device.

Brai. Nay, excellent justice, since I have laid myself thus open to you, now stand strong for me; both with your sword and your balance.

Clem. Body o' me, a merry knave! give me a bowl of sack: if he belong to you, master Knowell, I bespeak your patience.

Brai. That is it I have most need of: Sir, if you'll pardon me only, I'll glory in all the rest of my exploits.

Know. Sir, you know I love not to have my favours come hard from me.—You have your pardon, though I suspect you shrewdly for being of counsel with my son against me.

Brai. Yes, faith, I have, sir, though you retain'd me doubly this morning for yourself: first as Brainworm; after, as Fitz-Sword. I was your reform'd soldier, sir. 'Twas I sent you to Cob's upon the errand without end.

Know. Is it possible? or that thou should'st disguise thy language so as I should not know thee?

Brai. O, sir, this has been the day of my metamorphosis. It is not that shape alone that I have run through to-day. I brought this gentleman, master Kitely, a message too, in the form of master justice's man here, to draw him out o' the way, as well as your worship, while master Wellbred might make a conveyance of mistress Bridget to my young master.

Kit. How! my sister stolen away?

Know. My son is not married, I hope.

Brai. Faith, sir, they are both as sure as love, a priest, and three thousand pound, which is her portion, can make them; and by this time are ready to bespeak their wedding supper at the Windmill,

Digitized by Google

except some friend here prevent them, and invite them home.

Clem. Marry that will I; I thank thee for putting me in mind on't. Sirrah, go you and fetch them hither upon my warrant. [*Exit* Servant.] Neither's friends have cause to be sorry, if I know the young couple aright. Here, I drink to thee for thy good news. But, I pray thee, what hast thou done with my man, Formal?

Brai. Faith, sir, after some ceremony past, as making him drunk, first with story and then with wine, (but all in kindness,) and stripping him to his shirt, I left him in that cool vein; departed, sold your worship's warrant to these two, pawn'd his livery for that varlet's gown, to serve it in; and thus have brought myself by my activity to your worship's consideration.

Clem. And I will consider thee in another cup of sack. Here's to thee, which having drunk off, this is my sentence: Pledge me. Thou hast done, or assisted to nothing, in my judgment, but deserves to be pardoned for the wit of the offence. If thy master, or any man here, be angry with thee, I shall suspect his ingine,[9] while I know him, for't.—How now, what noise is that?

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, it is Roger is come home.

Clem. Bring him in, bring him in.

Enter FORMAL *in a suit of armour.*

What! drunk? in arms against me? your reason your reason for this?

Form. I beseech your worship to pardon me; I

[9] *I shall suspect his* ingine, &c.] From the Latin, *ingenium*, his wit, his understanding. WHAL.

Digitized by Google

happened into ill company by chance that cast me into a sleep, and stript me of all my clothes.

Clem. Well, tell him I am justice Clement, and do pardon him: but what is this to your armour? what may that signify?

Form. An't please you, sir, it hung up in the room where I was stript; and I borrow'd it of one of the drawers to come home in, because I was loth to do penance through the street in my shirt.

Clem. Well, stand by a while.

Enter E. KNOWELL, WELLBRED, *and* BRIDGET.

Who be these? O, the young company; welcome, welcome! Give you joy. Nay, mistress Bridget, blush not; you are not so fresh a bride, but the news of it is come hither afore you. Master bridegroom, I have made your peace, give me your hand: so will I for all the rest ere you forsake my roof.

E. Know. We are the more bound to your humanity, sir.

Clem. Only these two have so little of man in them, they are no part of my care.

Wel. Yes, sir, let me pray you for this gentleman, he belongs to my sister the bride.

Clem. In what place, sir?

Wel. Of her delight, sir, below the stairs, and in public: her poet, sir.

Clem. A poet! I will challenge him myself presently at extempore,

Mount up thy Phlegon,[1] *Muse, and testify,*
How Saturn, sitting in an ebon cloud,
Disrobed his podex, white as ivory,
And through the welkin thunder'd all aloud.

[1] *Mount up thy Phlegon, &c.*] It is not easy to follow Jonson through the numerous authors whose bombast he has burlesqued: my own experience, indeed, would justify the use of stronger language, but I speak generally. Many ridiculous books, or "ballads,"

Digitized by Google

Wel. He is not for extempore, sir: he is all for the pocket muse: please you command a sight of it.

Clem. Yes, yes, search him for a taste of his vein.

[*They search* MATHEW'S *pockets.*

Wel. You must not deny the queen's justice, sir, under a writ of rebellion.

Clem. What! all this verse? body o' me, he carries a whole realm, a commonwealth of paper in his hose: let us see some of his subjects. [*Reads.*

Unto the boundless ocean of thy face,
Runs this poor river, charg'd with streams of eyes.

How! this is stolen.[2]

as the quarto calls them, are undoubtedly lost, and many are necessarily overlooked; so that much of his humour still remains in obscurity. In the first edition, this absurd rant is said to be "in honour of the gods and goddesses;" and I observe in the *Zodiacke*, by Barnaby Googe, where there is certainly enough of this folly, a passage which our poet, (though I do not give the conjecture for much,) might possibly have had in view.

"Aloft, my Muse, raise up thyself,
And use a better flite,
Mount up on hie, and think it scorn
Of base affairs to write———
So up to Jove," &c.

However this may be, there is more than sufficient in the description of some of the constellations, particularly in that of Sagittarius, to shock the classical taste of Jonson, and excite his utmost risibility.

Steevens inclined to believe that "a burlesque was intended here on the masque in *Cymbeline:*"—but as *Cymbeline* luckily was not written till many years after this play, and the masque in it, not written at all by Shakspeare, no particular stress is laid on the "malignity" of Jonson to our great bard in this instance. Such is the force of candour!

[2] *How! this is stolen.*] Not altogether; but parodied from the first stanza of Daniel's *Sonnet to Delia:*

"Unto the boundless ocean of thy beauty
Runs this poor river, charg'd with streams of zeal;
Returning thee the tribute of my duty,
Which here my youth, my plaints, my love reveal."

Jonson's disinclination to Daniel broke out rather early. I am

Digitized by Google

E. Know. A parody! a parody! with a kind of miraculous gift, to make it absurder than it was.

Clem. Is all the rest of this batch? Bring me a torch; lay it together, and give fire. Cleanse the air. [*Sets the papers on fire.*] Here was enough to have infected the whole city, if it had not been taken in time. See, see, how our poet's glory shines! brighter and brighter! still it increases! O, now it is at the highest; and now it declines as fast. You may see, *sic transit gloria mundi!*

Know. There's an emblem for you, son, and your studies.[3]

Clem. Nay, no speech or act of mine be drawn against such as profess it worthily. They are not born every year, as an alderman. There goes more to the making of a good poet, than a sheriff.[4]

unable to account for it, unless it arose from a difference in taste. The chastised and vigorous mind of the former was not likely to find pleasure in the soft and morbid delicacy of the latter: yet Daniel must not be too lightly depreciated; many of his poems possess great beauty; and his virtues were not inferior to his talents.

[3] Know. *There's an emblem for you, son, and your studies.*] In the very opening of the play old Knowell expresses an anxiety to warn his son from the study "of idle poetry:" this application of the justice's *emblem* to him therefore, is well timed and judicious.

[4] *There goes more to the making of a good poet, than a sheriff: they are not born every year, as an alderman.*] Among plain citizens, this might be thought a reflection upon men of gravity and worship; and master Kitely seemed to take it so: but the merry justice thought no harm, when he thus gave us the sense of the old Latin verses:

Consules fiunt quotannis, et proconsules:
Solus poeta non quotannis nascitur.

Which Taylor the water-poet has paraphrased with much greater honour to the bard;

"When heav'n intends to do some mighty thing,
He makes a poet, or at least———a king." WHAL.

The water-poet seems to have found a more correct copy of "the

Digitized by Google

Master Kitely, you look upon me!—though I live in the city here, amongst you, I will do more reverence to him, when I meet him, than I will to the mayor out of his year. But these paper-pedlars! these ink-dablers! they cannot expect reprehension or reproach; they have it with the fact.

E. Know. Sir, you have saved me the labour of a defence.[5]

old Latin verses" than the commentator, who has jumbled them out of all order.

Consules fiunt quotannis, et novi proconsules,
Solus aut rex aut poeta non quotannis nascitur.

They are usually attributed to one Florus.

[5] E. Know. *Sir, you have saved me the labour of a defence.*] In the quarto, however, it is made. It would be unjust to Jonson, as well as the reader, to suppress the passage, which is full of noble feeling, at once rational, fervid, and sublime. It breathes the very spirit of high antiquity, Ῥηγμ' εστι γης αναπνεον ατμον ενθεον, and forms one of those numerous sources from which Milton (the unwearied though unnoticed follower of this great poet) derived inspiration and vigour. After giving master Matthew's scraps, the quarto proceeds thus:

Giu. Call you this poetry?

Lo. ju. Poetry! nay then call blasphemy religion;
Call devils, angels; and sin, piety:
Let all things be preposterously transchanged.

Lo. se. Why, how now, son; what! are you startled now?
Hath the brize prickt you, ha? go to; you see
How abjectly your poetry is rank'd,
In general opinion.

Lo. ju. I can refell opinion, and approve
The state of poesy, such as it is,
Blessed, eternal, and most true divine:
Indeed, if you will look on poesy,
As she appears in many, poor and lame,
Patch'd up in remnants and old worn-out rags,
Half starv'd for want of her peculiar food,
Sacred invention; then, I must confirm
Both your conceit and censure of her merit:
But view her in her glorious ornaments,
Attired in the majesty of art,
Set high in spirit with the precious taste
Of sweet philosophy; and, which is most,

Digitized by Google

Clem. It shall be discourse for supper between your father and me, if he dare undertake me. But to dispatch away these, you sign o' the soldier, and picture o' the poet, (but both so false, I will not have you hanged out at my door till midnight,) while we are at supper, you two shall penitently fast it out in my court without; and, if you will, you may pray there that we may be so merry within as to forgive or forget you when we come out. Here's a third,[6] because we tender your safety, shall watch you, he is provided for the purpose. Look to your charge, sir.

Step. And what shall I do?

Clem. O! I had lost a sheep an he had not bleated: why, sir, you shall give master Downright his cloak; and I will intreat him to take it. A trencher and a napkin you shall have in the buttery, and keep Cob and his wife company here; whom I will intreat first

Crown'd with the rich traditions of a soul,
That hates to have her dignity prophaned
With any relish of an earthly thought,
Oh then how proud a presence doth she bear!
Then is she like her self, fit to be seen
Of none but grave and consecrated eyes.
Nor is it any blemish to her fame,
That such lean, ignorant, and blasted wits,
Such brainless gulls, should utter their stolen wares
With such applauses in our vulgar ears;
Or that their slubber'd lines have current pass,
From the fat judgments of the multitude;
But that this barren and infected age,
Should set no difference 'twixt these empty spirits,
And a true poet; than which reverend name
Nothing can more adorn humanity.

Giu. Ay, Lorenzo: but election is now governed altogether by the influence of humour, which, instead of those holy flames that should direct and light the soul to eternity, hurls forth nothing but smoak and congested vapours, that stifle her up, and bereave her of sight and motion.

[6] *Here's a third, &c.*] He means Formal, who appears in Brainworm's rusty armour.

Digitized by Google

to be reconciled; and you to endeavour with your wit to keep them so.

Step. I'll do my best.

Cob. Why, now I see thou art honest, Tib, I receive thee as my dear and mortal wife again.

Tib. And I you, as my loving and obedient husband.

Clem. Good compliment! It will be their bridal night too. They are married anew. Come, I conjure the rest to put off all discontent. You, master Downright, your anger; you, master Knowell, your cares; master Kitely and his wife, their jealousy.
For, I must tell you both, while that is fed,
Horns in the mind are worse than on the head.

Kit. Sir, thus they go from me; kiss me, sweetheart.

See what a drove of horns fly in the air,
Wing'd with my cleansed and my credulous breath!
Watch 'em suspicious eyes, watch where they fall.
See, see! on heads, that think they have none at all!
O, what a plenteous world of this will come!
When air rains horns, all may be sure of some.

I have learn'd so much verse out of a jealous man's part in a play.

Clem. 'Tis well, 'tis well! This night we'll dedicate to friendship, love, and laughter. Master bridegroom, take your bride and lead; every one a fellow. Here is my mistress, Brainworm! to whom all my addresses of courtship shall have their reference: whose adventures this day, when our grandchildren shall hear to be made a fable, I doubt not but it shall find both spectators and applause. [*Exeunt.*[7]

[7] Having already entered into the merits of this comedy, I shall be brief in my present remarks. It is well known that *Every Man in his Humour* established the reputation of the author, and placed him, at once, in the foremost rank of the dramatic writers of the age; this station he still maintains; for

Digitized by Google

though many have wished, yet none have found hardihood enough, to dispute his claims to it.

It has been invidiously urged that the characters of this drama are not original: as a general observation, this may be allowed to pass, for they were undoubtedly copied from nature, as modified by extraneous circumstances in the poet's days; but when the enemies of Jonson descend to particulars, and specify the objects of his imitation, the absurdity and falsity of every charge become immediately manifest.

Jealousy is the *humour* of Kitely, but it is no more the jealousy of Ford than of Othello: original it neither is nor can be, for it is a passion as common as the air, and has been the property of the stage from the earliest times; yet what but a jaundiced eye can discover any servile marks of imitation? Kitely's alarms are natural, for his house is made the resort of young and riotous gallants; yet he opens his suspicions with great delicacy, and when circumstances "light as air," confirm them, he does not bribe a stranger to complete his dishonour, but places a confidential spy over his wife, to give notice of the first approaches to familiarity. In a word, the feelings, the language, and the whole conduct of Kitely are totally distinct from those of Ford, or any preceding stage character whatever. The author drew from nature; and as her varieties are infinite, a man of Jonson's keen and attentive observation, was under no necessity of borrowing from her at second hand.

Bobadill has never been well understood, and, therefore, is always too lightly estimated: because he is a boaster and a coward, he is cursorily dismissed as a mere copy of the ancient bully, or what is infinitely more ridiculous, of Pistol; but Bobadill is a creature *sui generis*, and perfectly original. The soldier of the Greek comedy, from whom Whalley wishes to derive him, as far as we can collect from the scattered remains of it, or from its eternal copyists, Plautus and Terence, had not many traits in common with Bobadill. Pyrgapolonices, and other captains with hard names, are usually wealthy; all of them keep a mistress, and some of them a parasite: but Bobadill is poor, as indeed are most of his profession, which, whatever it might be in Greece, has never been a gainful one in this country. They are profligate and luxurious; but Bobadill is stained with no inordinate vice, and is besides so frugal, that "a bunch of radishes, and a pipe to close the orifice of his stomach," satisfy all his wants. Add to this, that the vanity of the ancient soldier is accompanied with such deplorable stupidity, that all temptation to mirth is taken away; whereas Bobadill is really amusing. His gravity, which is of the most inflexible nature, contrasts admirably with the situations into which he is thrown; and though beaten, baffled, and disgraced, he

Digitized by Google

never so far forgets himself as to aid in his own discomfiture. He has no soliloquies like Bessus and Parolles, to betray his real character, and expose himself to unnecessary contempt; nor does he break through the decorum of the scene in a single instance. He is also an admirer of poetry, and seems to have a pretty taste for criticism, though his reading does not appear very extensive, and his decisions are usually made with somewhat too much promptitude. In a word, Bobadill has many distinguishing traits, and till a preceding braggart shall be discovered with something more than big words and beating to characterize him, it may not be amiss to allow Jonson the credit of having depended entirely on his own resources.

Knowell is a scholar and a gentleman; his *humour* is an overstrained solicitude for the purity of his son's morals, amidst an indulgence of lighter foibles: he is an amiable and well drawn character, and very artfully contrasted with the rude, but manly and consistent Downright.

Brainworm is evidently a favourite of the author; he is sufficiently amusing, and his transformations contribute very naturally to the perplexity of the scene: he is most successful in the mendicant soldier, a character not uncommon in those days either in the streets, or on the stage.

The rest require little notice. The females, as is usually the case, occupy but a small part of the poet's care; yet they are correctly drawn, and probably such as the family of a respectable merchant, in Jonson's time, would readily supply. Dame Kitely is a very natural character; unsuspicious in herself, but, having her fears once awakened, credulous and violent in the extreme. Bridget is merely a sensible young woman; not so vain of the attentions of her poetical lover, as not to sacrifice them to a more rational courtship; won, as was then the case, with little wooing, and easily persuaded to follow her own inclinations. The two young gentlemen fill the parts allotted to them with perfect propriety, and play upon the vanity and imbecillity of the other characters with very laughable effect: as for the two gulls, as they are called, they enhance and set off the absurdities of each other; and, as natural deficiency cannot be supplied, are dismissed with a simple exposure, by way of punishment: indeed, nothing can be more admirable, or consonant with justice, than the winding up of this drama, and the various dispensations dealt out to the different characters. The unities of time and place are sufficiently preserved; the action is confined to one neighbourhood, and occupies about eight hours, beginning at six and ending a little after two.

END OF VOL. I.

Digitized by Google

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

NOTES TO THE MEMOIRS OF BEN JONSON.

Page xxii.

BEN JONSON was born in the early part of the year 1574.] The year in Scotland, after A.D. 1600, began on the 1st of January, so that Drummond's date meant, as it would mean now, January 19, 1619. The chances are that Jonson was not born in the first three weeks of January, and we may conclude that he had "told six-and-forty year" in 1618, which would make him born some time in 1572. Gifford makes a brace of errors, each of which takes a year from Jonson's life. He was ignorant of the Scotch practice as to dates, and he assumes that a man who had "*told* forty-six years" was in his forty-*sixth*, instead of his forty-*seventh*, year. The verse about the 11th of June will be found in *Underwood* xcvii. vol. ix. p. 34.

P. xxii. *His grandfather was a man of some family and fortune.*] His own statement, as recorded by Drummond, vol. ix. p. 387, is that "his Grandfather came from Carlisle, and, he thought, from Anandale to it: he served King Henry 8, and was a gentleman. His Father losed all his estate under Queen Marie, having been cast in prisson and forfaitted: at last turn'd Minister: so he was a minister's son." Annandale is still the head-quarters of the Johnstone family, the head of whom was Marquis of Annandale, so that when people found fault with the dramatist for not calling himself *Johnson*, it should rather have been *Johnstone*. The name of Benjamin was not known in the border clan, and was evidently bestowed by the naturalized Puritan minister. See notes to the *Conversations*, vol. ix. p. 388.

Digitized by Google

P. xxiii. *On good grounds.*] Those good grounds were altogether swept away by Peter Cunningham's discovering that this Mrs. Thomas Fowler was buried at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, on the 2nd April, 1590, while the mother of Ben Jonson was alive in the reign of James I.

P. xxiv. *Hartshorn Lane, near Charing Cross.*] It was sometimes called Christopher Alley, and remained standing till 1760, when it was pulled down, and Northumberland Street built on its site. One half of Northumberland Street has in its turn made way for the Charing Cross Hotel and Railway Station.

P. xxvi. *A longer connection with Cambridge than is usually supposed.*] Jonson told Drummond that "he was Master of Arts in both Universities, *by their favour, not his studies*," and had he owed much more to one than to the other the fact would certainly have been apparent in his highly elaborated dedication of the *Fox* to "The Most Noble and Most Equal Sisters, the Two Famous Universities." In the next age there was another illustrious poet, and *Old Westminster*, another convert from Protestantism to Popery, who, under somewhat similar circumstances, left the question in no doubt.

> "Oxford to him a dearer name shall be
> Than his own mother University.
> Thebes did his green unknowing Youth engage:
> He chooses Athens in his riper age."

P. xxvii. *Note* 8.] Aubrey and Wood between them have made a hash of the story of Jonson's tutorship to the young Raleigh, which had unhappily something more than a foundation of truth. It did not happen, however, in 1593, two years before the young man was born, but in 1613, when he was eighteen years of age. See *Conversations*, vol. ix. p. 391. The passage was not in the only copy of Drummond's notes to which Gifford had access.

P. xxviii. *Till he arrived at the age of eighteen.*] Gifford having calculated Jonson's birth as having taken place in 1574, makes him embark for the Low Countries in 1592, at which time he would be twenty and not eighteen, and thus have spent nearer three years than one at his father-in-law's trade. Drummond notes: "I think the trade was to be a wright or bricklayer." The term "wright" was commonly applied to a carpenter, but there can be no doubt that a bricklayer and plasterer was Jonson's craft. Throughout the *Satiromastix* the allusions to it are incessant. "Like a bricklayer in a Play;" "The whooreson poor lyme and hayre rascal;" "the foul-fisted mortar-treader;" "dost stamp? thou thinkst th' ast mortar under thy feet;" "Ovid's mortar-morphosist," &c.

Digitized by Google

P. xxix. *Jonson's stay in the Low Countries did not extend much beyond one campaign.*] Most probably not, but all that is known is his own statement that, "*returning soone*, he betook himself to his wonted studies." Vol. ix. p. 388.

P. xxix. *A single combat.*] Jonson's own words are, that "In his service in the Low Countries he had, in the face of both the campes, killed ane enemie, and taken *opima spolia* from him." Vol. ix. p. 388.

P. xxx. *The death of his father.*] It seems more than probable that Jonson's marriage, which Gifford puts off till after his release from prison (see *post*, p. xxxvi.), took place seven years earlier. At p. 155, vol. viii. will be found Jonson's beautiful lines on the death of his first daughter Mary, and in the Register of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Peter Cunningham found this entry: "1593, Nov. 17. Sepulta fuit, Maria Johnson, peste." If this was Jonson's daughter, she must have been born in May, 1593, and her parents have been married in the middle of 1592.

P. xxx. *A strolling player.*] The words in *Satiromastix* are: "Thou call'st Demetrius [Dekker] Journeyman Poet, but thou putt'st up a supplication to be a poor Journeyman Player, and had'st been still so, but that thou couldst not set a good face upon't; thou hast forgot how thou amblest (in leather pilch) by a play-wagon in the high-way, and tookst mad Jeronimo's part to get service among the Mimickes." It must be remembered that this was acted by and before people who knew Jonson's history as well as they did their own. Dekker might caricature and exaggerate, but he would hardly invent.

P. xxxii. *Took mad Jeronymo's part.*] Mr. Collier, in his *History of the Stage*, vol. iii. p. 208, says: "It is evident that if there be any truth in Dekker's assertion (controverted by Gifford) that Ben Jonson originally performed the part of Jeronimo, he must allude not to the *First part of Jeronimo* but to *The Spanish Tragedy*, where nothing is said regarding the personal appearance of the hero or his representative." Mr. Dyce remarks on the foregoing: "Gifford's reasoning, however, still holds good. *The Spanish Tragedy* forms a *Second Part* to the *First Part* of *Jeronimo*, and surely an audience to whom the diminutive hero of the *First Part* was so familiar, would hardly have tolerated such an absurdity as the personation of that character in the Second Part by a tall or bulky actor." Mr. Dyce writes about it as if the "Play-wagon in the high-way" were the Princess's Theatre under Charles Kean. Such audiences as were got together were not likely to be particular about niceties and consistencies; and Dekker expressly tells us that it was the Second

Digitized by Google

not the First Part he performed in when he says, "When thou ranst mad for the death of Horatio, thou borrowdst a gown of Roscius the stager (that honest Nicodemus), and sents't it home lousie, dids't not? *Responde*, dids't not?"

P. xxxiii. *Obscure play-house called the Green Curtain.*] When the church of the Holywell Priory was pulled down, many houses were built for noblemen and strangers, "and near thereunto are builded two publique-houses for the acting and shewes of comedies, tragedies, and histories for recreation. Whereof one is called the 'Courtein,' the other the 'Theatre;' both standing on the S.W. side, towards the field." The present *Curtain Road, Shoreditch, E.C.*, preserves the memory of one of these two Elizabethan "Criterions." In the *Satiromastix*, Tucca says: When the Stagerites banisht thee into the Ile of Dogs, thou turndst ban-dog, villanous Guy, and ever since bittst." The Stagerites, quasi stage-wrights, was, I suppose, a name given playfully to the Curtain actors, and the Isle of Dogs we know stood for Paris Garden, where he "played Zulziman" according to the same authority.

P. xxxiii. *An event of a very serious nature.*] Jonson after telling Drummond about his single combat in the Low Countries, went on to say: "Since his coming to England, being appealed to the fields, he had killed his adversary, which had hurt him in the arm, and whose sword was ten inches longer than his: to the which he was imprisoned and almost at the gallows." This is quite consistent with the passage quoted from the *Satiromastix* in Gifford's note (7), as also with another passage in the same play, where Tucca is accusing Jonson of ingratitude to the players. "Thou art the true arraigned Poet, and shouldst have been hanged, but for one of these part-takers, these charitable copper-laced Christians, that fetch'd thee out of Purgatory—*players* I mean—theaterians, pouch-mouth-stage-walkers."

So the matter rested up to 1846, when Mr. Collier, among his innumerable services to English literature, published a letter from Phillip Henslowe to his son-in-law Edward Alleyn, dated September 26, 1598, containing the following passage: "Sence yow weare with me, I have lost one of my company, which hurteth me greatley, that is Gabrell, for he is slayen in hogesden fylldes, by the hands of bergemen Jonson, bricklayer; therefore I wold fayne have a litell of your cownsell yf I cowld." Mr. Collier thinks it remarkable that Henslowe should call Jonson a "bricklayer" two years after he had written *Every Man in his Humour*, but it must be remembered that the old manager was writing in bitterness of spirit for the loss of a useful servant and friend, and bestows a title which we can imagine was often enough employed behind his back, and

Digitized by Google

not unfrequently thrown in his teeth in the horse-play and coarse raillery of a sixteenth-century green-room. The date is of real importance in two other respects. It settles beyond dispute that Jonson was married before he was thrown into prison, and it prolongs his adherence to the Church of Rome to the year 1610, when he published his *Alchemist*. Mr. Collier's further researches establish beyond a doubt that the name of Jonson's unfortunate opponent was Gabriel Spenser. See note to *Epigram* xlv. vol. viii. p. 167.

P. xxxvi. *Struggle with poverty for the sake of her children.*] Since Gifford wrote, the parish registers of London have been very narrowly examined. I have already mentioned in a note on p. xxx. a baptismal entry which may or may not refer to the child of the dramatist. Mr. Collier discredits it, but appears to have no doubt about the following :—

1. A son, named Joseph, buried on 9th December, 1599, at St. Giles', Cripplegate.
2. An "infant" son, named Benjamin, buried 1st October, 1600, at St. Botolph, Bishopsgate.
3. Benjamin Johnson, sonne to Benjamin, baptized 20th February, 1607 (*i. e.* 1608), in St. Anne's, Blackfriars, and buried in the same parish, 18th November, 1611.
4. Benjamin Johnson, fil: Ben. bapt. fuit Aprilis 6th, 1610, St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

The learned members of the Shakspeare Society, from whose publications these facts are derived, make no attempt to explain how these two Benjamin-ben-Benjamins could have been alive at the same time, if they were children of the same parents. From the register of St. Giles', Cripplegate, Mr. Collier has extracted yet another entry, which he thinks may probably record a second marriage of the Poet's :

"27th July, 1623. Married: Ben Johnson, and Hester Hopkins."

P. xxxvii. Every Man in His Humour *having been acted eleven times between, &c.*] This is all assumption, and most probably erroneous assumption. It is tolerably certain that the play registered by Henslowe as "The Comodey of Vmers" was Chapman's, not Jonson's, and the "eleven times" a piece of Malone's imagination. On the contrary, on the 11th May, 1597, the letters *ne* for *new* are prefixed to it, meaning that it was the first night of representation, making it perfectly clear that it is the "New Play of Humours," described by Chamberlain on 11th June, 1597. See my note to p. 2, *post*.

Digitized by Google

P. xxxix. *Recording an advance of five shillings.*] Dates are all essential in these small matters. The entry is "Lent Bengemyne Johnson, the 5 of Jenewary, 1597 (*i.e.* 1598), in Redy Mony, the some of v. *s.*" *Henslowe's Diary*, p. 256.

P. xliii. *The credit of two plays. Note* 5.] The first entry is given very incorrectly in the note. The date is the 28th not the 22nd, and the money is payable *not* "to my sonne," but to "*any one*" that shall demand it.

P. xlviii. *Every Man in His Humour.*] This play was acted when the Court was at Nonsuch. "There were divers Almans (present), whereof one lost out of his purse, at a play, 3 hundred crownes, a new play called *Every man's humour.*" Toby Mathew to Dudley Carleton. September 20, 1598.

P. xlviii. *This exquisite character of Jonson. Note* 1.] There is no reason to suppose that Shiels would have fabricated such a passage. We know that the sheets were not corrected by him but by Theophilus Cibber, and it is fair to suppose that the inverted commas were continued by an error of the press. For the rest no excuse can be offered.

P. lvi. *Three distinct notices of Jonson appear in Mr. Henslowe's memorandum book.*] I annex the entries, from the last of which it is evident that Gifford had mislaid his copy of it. He would otherwise have known that this advance also was for the "Scottes tragedie."

"Lent unto Wm. Borde, alles birde, the ten of Auguste, 1599, to lend unto Bengemyne Johnsone, and thomas Deckers, in earneste of ther boocke they are a writtinge, called pagge of plimothe, the some . . . . . 30*s.*

"Lent unto Thomas Downton, the 3 of Septmbr., 1599, to lend unto Thomas Deckers, Bengeman Johnson, hary Chettell, and other Jentellman, in earneste of a playe calld Robart the second, Kinge of Scottes tragedie, the some of . . 40*s.*

"Lent unto Wm Borne, the 27 of Septmbr 1599, to lend unto Bengemen Johnsone, in earneste of a Boocke called the Scottes tragedie, the some of . . . . 20*s.*"

Immediately below this last is an advance, through the same hands, of forty shillings to "Mr. maxton the new poete" [Mr. Mastone interlined], which makes me feel tolerably confident that he is the "jentellman" whose name was unknown at the time of the second payment.

P. lix. *Of this Jonson obtained full information.*] I am not aware of any direct authority for this. The *Satiromastix* bears on the face of it that it could not have been even planned before the publication of the *Poetaster*. There was no doubt plenty of provocation on

Digitized by Google

both sides. Jonson told Drummond (vol. ix. p. 391) that Marston represented him on the stage as "in his youth given to venerie." And in the *Scourge of Villanie* Marston speaks of "the late perfumed fist of judiciall Torquatus (that like some rotten stick in a troubled water hath gotte a great deale of barmie froth to stick to his sides). I knowe hee will vouchsafe it some of his new-minted epithets (as reall, intrinsecate, Delphicke), when in my conscience hee understands not the least part of it." *Marston's Works*, vol. iii. p. 245. We cannot help crediting Jonson's public assertion, that for three years they had been provoking him with their "petulant styles," but at the same time we may be certain that he did not refrain from paying them back in their own coin and with interest. We also know from his own mouth that "he had many quarrels with Marston, beat him, and took his pistol from him."

P. lix. *Note* 2.] Besides the advance of xxxx*s*. mentioned by Gifford "upon his writtinge of his adicions in Geronymo," there is another and more important entry in the following year, to which he afterwards refers, p. lxv.:

"Lent unto Bengemy Johnsone at the appoyntment of E. Alleyn and Wm. Birde the 22 June 1602, in earnest of a boocke called Richard Crook-back, and for new adycions for Jeronymo, the some of . . . . . x lb."

Mr. Collier says with regard to the entries: "The additions were not made to the play called *The first part of Jeronymo*, but to the *Spanish Tragedy*. Ben Jonson's additions here spoken of were printed in 1602, with *The Spanish Tragedy*, which on the title-page is stated to 'be newly corrected, amended and enlarged, with new additions of the Painter's part and others.' They are reprinted in the last edition of *Dodsley's Old Plays*, but Gifford and other biographers of Ben Jonson have taken little notice of them, although singularly beautiful, and highly characteristic of that great poet." So beautiful are they that Charles Lamb "suspects the agency of some more potent spirits" than Jonson's. They will be found at vol. ix. p. 358 of this edition.

P. lx. *Of the soldiers Jonson got quit without much difficulty.*] On this subject a note of Thomas Campbell's is well worth quoting. "Jonson's superiority in the contest can scarcely be questioned; but the *Poetaster* drew down other enemies on its author than those with whom he was at war. His satire alluded to the follies of soldiers, and the faults of lawyers. The former were easily pacified, but the lawyers adhered to him with their wonted tenacity; and it became necessary for the poet to clear himself before the Lord Chief Justice. In our own days the fretfulness of resenting professional derision has been deemed unbecoming even the magnanimity of tailors." *Specimens*, p. 145.

Digitized by Google

P. lxiv. *Decker has the inconceivable folly to fix on William Rufus, a rude and ignorant soldier, &c.*] This is the precise reason which led the confederates to fix upon him as the proper hero of their burlesque. The *Satiromastix* is much more stinging and sparkling than any one would suppose from Gifford's account of it. It is simply unjust to say that Dekker "writes in downright passion, and foams through every page." On the contrary, there is a pervading air of good-tempered remonstrance about his work, which must have rendered its representation very pleasant to the audiences of the time, and which evidently prevented Jonson from feeling any permanent annoyance about it. Seventeen years afterwards he told Drummond that "Sharpham, Day, and Dicker were all rogues," and we have no reason to suppose that he meant the word in a very harsh sense. Besides this, the play has some very fine serious passages in it, and one scene in particular has been praised for its "beauty and force" by Charles Lamb.

P. lxiv. *The comic muse had been so ominous to him.*] Gifford is, of course, right as to the sense in which Jonson used this word, ominous; but how does he know that none of his comedies had been ill received? It is quite certain that he wrote many pieces of which we do not even know the names, and amongst them those "garlick comedies" with which he is twitted in the *Satiromastix*. In 1619 he told Drummond that "the half of his comedies were not in print," and as we know of eight that had been printed, we can guess the extent of our ignorance.

P. lxviii. *The seat of sir W.* Cavendish.] The name should be sir William *Cornwallis*. See vol. vi. p. 458.

P. lxviii. *A second pen had good share in it.*] See supplemental note on vol. iii. p. 6. The only difficulty in the Beaumont theory is the expression, "my loathed usurpation." But I cannot see why "Shakspeare is entirely out of the question," as he certainly acted in the play. Thomas Campbell has given an admirable criticism on this tragedy. See supplemental note to vol. iii. p. 151.

P. lxix. Sejanus.] The late George Daniel possessed a unique copy, on large paper, of the *Sejanus*, 4to. 1605, which contained the following inscription in Jonson's autograph :—

"To my perfect friend, Mr. Francis Crane, I erect this Altar of Friendship, And leave it as the Eternall Witness of my Love. BEN JONSON."

P. lxx. *The* critics *affirm.*] Marston's words leave no doubt on the question. "Know that I have not laboured in this Poeme, to tye myselfe to relate any thing as an historian, but to inlarge every thing as a poet. *To transcribe authors, quote authorities, and trans-*

Digitized by Google

late Latin prose orations into English blank verse, hath in this subject been the least ayme of my studies." *Halliwell's Marston*, vol. i. p. 147. I suppose the fact is, that there were many quarrels and many reconciliations.

P. lxxii. *Written against the Scots. Note*.*] I think Gifford has overlooked the passage in *Eastward Hoe* which contained the real cause of offence, and for which "he was delated by sir James Murray to the King":—

"1 *Gent.* Farewell, farewell; we will not know you for shaming of you. *I ken the man weel; hee's one of my thirty pound knights.*

"2 *Gent.* Now this is hee that stole his knighthood o' the grande day for foure pounde giving to a page; all the monie in 's purse, I wot wel." A. iv. S. 1.

It is easy to imagine what would have been the effect of this on the stage, if a little mimicry of king James and his Scotch pronunciation was thrown into it, as was evidently the intention of the writer.

P. lxxiv. *Having obtained a pardon.*] On this passage Mr. Dyce remarks: "If Gifford had lived to reprint the present essay, he would have noticed here a second imprisonment, which, soon after his release, Jonson underwent with Chapman, in consequence, it would appear, of supposed reflections cast upon some individual in a play of which they were the joint authors. The letter from Jonson to the earl of Salisbury, which mentions these particulars, will be found at the end of a note on a later part of this memoir, having been put into Gifford's hands by Mr. D'Israeli since that note had gone to press." See p. cxvi. note 7.

P. lxxx. *Strains that yet live.*] Nevertheless, Jonson told Drummond that "Salisbury never cared for any man longer nor he could make use of him," vol. ix. p. 396. This was notoriously true, and perhaps of the father as much as of the son.

P. lxxxiv. *Stow tells us that the "Speeches" were delivered on the 16th of July, 1607, in a chamber called "The King's Chamber."*] Stow *died* on the 5th of April, 1605. Gifford must have been quoting from some one of his many continuators.

P. lxxxiv. *Received periodical sums, &c.*] Among the noblemen who honoured themselves in this way, was William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, who every New-year's Day sent him twenty pounds "to buy books." Could anything be more delicately generous? Before Pembroke's death, these would have made a library of themselves; but as Jonson told Drummond, he had "sundry times to *devoure* his books," i. e. sell them for necessity.

Digitized by Google

P. lxxxv. *The marriage of lord Haddington.*] This was the lord Ramsay who made such a sensation by switching Philip earl of Montgomery across the face on the racecourse at Croydon. He was afterwards created earl of Holdernesse.

P. lxxxix. *He was at Paris in* 1613.] This was on the occasion of his accompanying sir Walter Raleigh's son. See vol. ix. p. 391.

P. xc. *Note* 6.] Simon Basil, the surveyor general, of whose office James had given the reversion to Inigo, died in 1615.

P. xcii. *How he was employed till* 1616.] Gifford was not aware that in this year Jonson aided in an entertainment given to the king in the City. Gerard writes to Carleton in *June*, 1616, "The king feasted by Alderman Cockayne and the new Company of Merchant Adventurers, who gave him a thousand pounds in a basin and ewer of gold. Dyeres, cloth-dressers with their shuttles, and Hamburgians, were presented to the king, *and spake such language as Ben Jonson putt in theyre mouthes.*"

P. ci. *The greater part of the month of April*, 1619.] Mr. Dyce remarks on this: "No acquaintance seems to have existed between Jonson and Drummond till some months after the former had reached Edinburgh. The precise time of Jonson's visit to Hawthornden is uncertain, but it was undoubtedly previous to the 17th of January, 1619. After the remarks which have been drawn forth in various quarters by Gifford's furious attack on the poet of Hawthornden, no reader perhaps may now require to be informed that it is altogether unjust; but whoever wishes to see a complete and circumstantial vindication of Drummond's motives and character, will find it in Mr. D. Laing's preface to *Notes of B. Jonson's Conversations.*" The only way to do justice to Jonson and Drummond—and Gifford himself, for that matter—is to reprint at full length the true version of these Conversations as brought to light by Mr. Laing. They are accompanied by the requisite illustrative matter.

P. cx. *He passed some months* (*and Note* 7).] His visit to Drummond must have been of only a few days' duration. He left finally on the 25th of January, 1619, although he did not write to Drummond from London till May the 10th.

P. cxiii. *With all speed.*] These letters are very inaccurately printed. After the words "with all speed" in the top line, should come "especially I make it my request that you will enquire for me whether the Students' method at St. Andrews be the same with that at Edinburgh, and so to assure me, or wherein they differ."

Digitized by Google

P. cxiv. *Drummond's letter at the top of the page.*] This letter is printed in the Drummond folio of 1711, p. 234. The date of January 17, 1619, escaped Gifford's notice. He perhaps thought that 1619 was 1620; but as I have said before (p.155), this was not the custom of Scotland. The interest of this letter consists in its having been written while Jonson was in Scotland. In the sixth line, "*catalogue* of them *that* love you," should be "*calendar* of them *who* love you." I can see no reason for making the change. The epigram sent by Drummond was the original Latin of *Underwood* No. vi. vol. viii. p. 310. *The Masque at Court on Twelfth Night*, 1618-19, was "performed by the prince, Buckingham, and others." They knew the queen was dying.

P. cxiv. *Except from the lips of* hopeless idiotism.] Sir Walter Scott quotes this passage in his *Provincial Antiquities*, where, in describing Hawthornden, he enters upon a vindication of Drummond, and alludes good-humouredly to the "heavy denunciation under which the attempt has been prohibited." Scott's *Misc. Prose Works*, vii. 374.

P. cxx. *Reversionary grant of the office of Master of the Revels.*] This was not till October, 1621, and yet in the *Satiromastix*, which has 1602 upon its title-page, we find (p. 231) Sir Vaughan saying, "Master Horace, let your wittes inhabite in your right places: if I fall sansomely upon the Widdow, I have some cossens Garman at court, shall beget you the reversion of the Master of the Kings Revels, or else be his Lord of Misrule nowe at Christmas." Another question suggests itself—how comes it that in 1602 the office is called Master of the *King's* Revels? The queen, it is true, died on the 24th March, 1603, that is, a week before the end of 1602, but James did not reach Theobalds till the 3rd of May.

P. cxxi. *He is said to have assisted Middleton and Fletcher in writing the* Widow.] Mr. Collier thinks there is internal evidence that Ben Jonson contributed to the *Widow*, and is surprised that Mr. Gifford did not trace his pen through the whole of the fourth act. Mr. Dyce's caution led him to include it in his collection of Beaumont and Fletcher's works as well as of Middleton's. When Gifford has occasion to speak of the play again, in a note on the *New Inn*, vol. v. p. 406, he says that, although it was not printed in Jonson's lifetime, it appeared on the stage in 1618. On May 11, 1622, Chamberlain wrote to Carleton: "Barclay's *Argenis* has grown so scarce, that the price has risen from 5*s.* to 14*s.*: the king has ordered Ben Jonson to translate it, but he will not be able to equal the original." *Cal. Jac.* p. 390.

P. cxxiv. *Note* 8.] Gifford says that *Pan's Anniversary* (vol. viii.

Digitized by Google

p. 48) is the only masque in which Jonson introduced Echo. He had forgotten that in the *Masque of Blackness* (vol. vii. p. 15) First Echo and Second Echo take very effective parts. I cannot find the note to the *Arcades* to which Gifford refers, but Thomas Warton was by no means backward in admitting Milton's obligations to Jonson.

P. cxxxiii. *The city, from whom he had been accustomed.*] Mr. Dyce, in his *Life of Middleton* (1840), has pointed out that Jonson succeeded Middleton as "Cities Chronologer," and has given the following very interesting extracts from the City Records. The friendly and potential intercession of the king is a most pleasing circumstance. Mr. Dyce says, "Jonson no doubt continued to hold this office till his death. He was succeeded in it by Francis Quarles."

"Martis Secundo die Septembris 1628 Annoque R Rs Caroli Angliæ &c quarto.

Hamersly Mayor. Rep. No. 42. f. 271.

"Item: this daie Beniamyn Johnson Gent is by this Court admitted to be the Cities Chronologer in place of Mr. Thomas Middleton deceased, to have hold exercise and enioye the same place and to have and receive for that his service out of the Chamber of London the some of one hundred Nobles per Annum to contynue duringe the pleasure of this Court and the First quarters payment to begin att Michaelmas next."

"Jovis decimo die Novembris 1631 Annoque Regni Regis Caroli Angliæ &c septimo.

Whitmore Mayor. Rep. N. 46. f. 8.

"Item: it is ordered by this Court that Mr. Chamberlen shall forbeare to pay any more fee or wages unto Beniamine Johnson the Cities Chronologer until he shall haue presented unto this Court some fruits of his labours in that his place."

"Jovis xviij° die Septembris 1634 Annoque R Rs Caroli Angliæ &c decimo.

Mowlson Mayor. Rep. N. 48, f. 433.

"Item: this day Mr. Recorder and Sir James Hamersley Knight and Alderman declared unto this Court His Majesty's pleasure signified unto them by the right hon^ble^ the Earle of Dorsett for and in the behalfe of Beniamine Johnson the Cittyes Chronologer, Whereupon it is ordered by this Court that his yearely pencion of one hundred nobles out of the Chamber of London shalbe continued and that Mr. Chamberlen shall satisfie and pay unto him his arrerages thereof."

Digitized by Google

P. cxxxiii. *Note* 1.] This "petitionary letter" to the earl of Newcastle is so characteristic that I give it at full length from the Shakspeare Society papers:

"My Noble and most honor'd Lord,

"I myself being no substance, am fain to trouble you with shadows, or (what is less) an Apologue or Fable in a dream. I being strucken with the Palsy in the year 1628, had by sir Thomas Badger some few months since a Fox sent me for a present, which creature by handling I endeavoured to make tame, as well for the abating of my disease as the delight I took in speculation of his nature. It happened this present year, 1631, and this very week, being the week ushering Christmas, and this Tuesday morning in a dream, (and morning dreams are truest) to have one of my servants come up to my bedside and tell me—'Master, master, the Fox speaks!' Whereat (me thought,) I started, and troubled went down into the yard, to witness the wonder. There I found my Reynard in his tenement—the Tub I had hired for him—cynically expressing his own lot to be condemned to the house of a Poet, where nothing was to be seen but the bare walls, and not anything heard but the noise of a saw, dividing billets all the week long, more to keep the family in exercise than to comfort any person there with fire, save the paralytick master; and went on in this way as the Fox seemed the better Fabler of the two. I his master, began to give him good words and stroke him, but Reynard, barking, told me those would not do, I must give him meat. I angry called him stinking vermin. He replied, 'Look into your cellar, which is your larder too, you'll find a worse vermin there.' When presently calling for a light, methought I went down and found all the floor turned up, as if a colony of moles had been there, or an army of salt-petre men. Whereupon I sent presently into Tuttle Street for the King's most excellent Mole catcher, to relieve me and hunt them. But he, when he came and viewed the place, and had well marked the earth turned up, took a handfull, smelt it, and said, 'Master, it is not in my power to destroy this vermin; the King, or some good man of a Noble Nature must help you. This kind of Mole is called a WANT, which will destroy you and your family, if you prevent not the working of it in time. And therefore God keep you and send you health.'

"The interpretation both of the Fable and dream is, that I waking do find WANT the worst and most working vermin in a house, and therefore my noble Lord, and next the King my best Patron, I am necessitated to tell it you. I am not so impudent to borrow any sum of your Lordship, for I have no faculty to pay; but my needs are such, and so urging, as I do beg what your

Digitized by Google

bounty can give me, in the name of Good Letters, and the bond of an ever grateful and acknowledging servant

"To your honour,

"Westminster, 20mo Dec^{bris} 1631. "BEN JONSON.

"Yesterday the barbarous Court of Aldermen have withdrawn their Chandlerly Pension for Verjuice and Mustard 33li 6. 8."

P. cxxxviii. *To the earl of Newcastle.*] This letter is so strangely misprinted that I suspect Gifford never read it. I subjoin a true copy:—

"My Lord,

"The faith of a fast friend, with the duties of an humble servant, and the hearty prayers of a Religious Beadsman, all kindled upon this Altar; to your Hon^{r}, my Hono^{ble} Lo., the hopefull issue, and your right Noble Brother, bee ever my sacrifice.

"It is the Lewd Printer's fault that I can send yor Lor^{p} no more of my Booke done. I sent you one piece before, the Fayre, by Mr. Withrington, and now I send you this other morcell, the Fine Gentleman that walks the Towne, the Fiend, but before we will perfect the rest, I feare he will come himselfe to be a part, under the title of the absolute Knave, which hee hath play'd with mee; my Printer and I shall afford subject enough for a Tragi-Comedy, for with his delayes and vexation I am almost become blind; and if Heaven be so just in the Metamorphosis, to turne him into that creature hee most assimilates, a Dog with a Bell to lead mee between Whitehall and my Lodging, I may bid the world good night.

"And so I doo

"BEN: JONSON."

"The Fayre" of course is *Bartholomew Fair*, and "The Fiend" the *Devil is an Ass*. Had Gifford seen the true version of this letter, he must at once have abandoned his constantly reiterated idea, that these two plays and the *Staple of News*, which have the date 1631, were printed without Jonson's authority.

P. cxxxviii. *Sufficient influence with the master of the revels to prevent its appearance.*] The following are the entries in sir Henry Herbert's book:—

"R. for allowinge of *The Tale of the Tubb*, Vitru. Hoop's parte wholly strucke out, and the motion of the tubb, by command from my lord chamberlin; exceptions being taken against it by Inigo Jones, surveyor of the King's workes, as a personal injury unto him. May 7, 1633. £2 0 0.

"The Tale of the Tubb, was acted on Tuesday night at Court, the 16 Janu. 1633 by the Queenes Players and not likte."

Var. Shakspeare, 1813, iii. 282-287.

Digitized by Google

P. cxli. *Profanations of the sacred name like all his contemporaries.*] It would have been better on the whole, I think, if Gifford had allowed the text of Jonson in this respect, as well as others, to stand as it appears in the folio of 1616. Charles the First's declaration, in the case of D'Avenant's *The Wits*, is well known, as reluctantly recorded by sir Henry Herbert: "The Kinge is pleased to take *faith, death, slight* for asseverations, and no oaths." To this Malone adds in a note: "In a small tract of the last age, of which I have forgot the title, we are told that Charles the Second, being reprimanded by one of his Bishops for frequently introducing profane oaths in his discourse, defended himself by saying, *Your martyr swore twice more than I do.*" *Shakspeare, Var.* 1813, vol. iii. p. 285.

P. cxlii. *He died on the 6th of August*, 1637.] Gifford, or some earlier biographer, has changed the date from Old Style to New, as we learn from a contemporary note of sir Edward Walker, Garter, which was printed in *Notes and Queries*, 1st s. vi. 405.

"Thursday 17th August, Died at Westminster, Mr. Benjamin Johnson, the most famous, accurate and learned poet of our age, especially in the English tongue, having left behind him many rare pieces, which have sufficiently demonstrated to the world his worth. He was buried the next day following, being accompanied to his grave by all or the greatest parte of the nobilitye and gentry then in the towne." It is, I believe, the practice—it certainly ought to be—to retain the Old Style for all occurrences in our island up to the day of the passing of lord Macclesfield's act.

P. cxliii. *Overwhelmed with affliction for an irreparable loss.*] This must have been written by Gifford with reference to the death of his favourite servant, over whose body, in Grosvenor Chapel burying-ground, he placed the following inscription:—

"Here lies the body of
Ann Davies
(for more than xx years)
Servant to William Gifford.
She died February 6th, 1815, in
the xxxxiii year of her age,
of a tedious and painful malady,
which she bore
with exemplary patience and resignation.
Her deeply afflicted master
erected this stone to her memory,
as a painful testimony of
her uncommon worth,
and of his perpetual gratitude,
respect and affection
for her long and meritorious services.

Digitized by Google

"Though here unknown, dear Ann, thy ashes rest,
Still lives thy memory in one grateful breast,
That traced thy course through many a painful year,
And marked thy humble hope, thy pious fear.
O! when this frame, which yet, while life remained,
Thy duteous love with trembling hand sustained,
Dissolves (as soon it must) while that bless'd Power,
Who beamed on thine, illume my parting hour!
So shall I greet thee, where no ills annoy,
And what was sown in grief, is reaped in joy:
Whose worth, obscured below, bursts into day,
And those are paid, whom Earth could never pay."

Sir Walter Scott mentions in his *Diary:* "Gifford had one singular custom. He used always to have a duenna of a housekeeper to sit in his study with him while he wrote. This female companion died when I was in London, and his distress was extreme. I afterwards heard he got her place supplied. I believe there was no scandal in all this." *Lockhart's Life*, p. 654.

P. cxliv. *He speaks of his "mountain belly and his ungracious gait."*] The first expression occurs in *Underwood* No. vii., "*My Picture left in Scotland*" (vol. viii. p. 312). I am not aware where the latter part came from.

P. cxlvi. *A writer of the present day.*] This was sir Walter Scott, and had he not been a Tory and a Quarterly Reviewer, he would have fared still worse. Here are his own remarks:—

"I observe the ingenious editor of the late excellent edition of Jonson's works, expresses some indignation at the charge brought against that eminent author in this note, and denies the authority of the latter writer, who characterizes Jonson as indulging in vulgar excess. Few men have more sincere admiration for Jonson's talents than the present writer. But surely that coarseness of taste which tainted his powerful mind, is proved from his writings. Many authors of that age are indecent, but Jonson is filthy and gross in his pleasantry, and indulges himself in using the language of scavengers and nightmen. His *Bartholomew Fair* furnishes many examples of this unhappy predilection, and his *Famous Voyage* seems to have disgusted even the zeal of his editor. But in marking these faults, I was far from meaning to assail the well-earned reputation of Rare Ben Jonson, who could well afford to be guilty of these sins against decorum, while his writings afford so strong and masculine a support to the cause of virtue and religion." Sir Walter Scott, *Life of Dryden*, 2nd ed. *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. i. p. 227.

Digitized by Google

P. clv. *Note* 4. *The duke of Buckingham* (*Sheffield*) *used to talk with great satisfaction of his being taken to see Jonson when he was a boy.*] If Malone, or the luckless Weber, had written such a note as this, what language would have been bad enough for them? Sheffield was born in 1649, *twelve years after Jonson died!* If the story is true of any duke of Buckingham, it would be of the younger Villiers, who was born ten years before the death of Jonson, and was possessed of far more natural genius than Sheffield.

P. clxxviii. *He makes his appearance like his own Delight.*] See the *Vision of Delight* (vol. vii. p. 281), which Gifford truly says is one of the most beautiful of Jonson's little pieces, "light, airy, harmonious, and poetical in no common degree."

P. ccxviii. *Mr. Malone had previously employed several pages in proving* Twelfth Night *to be written in* 1614, *that is, sixteen years* before *the appearance of* Every Man out of his Humour.] Here by a slip of the pen Gifford has put *before* instead of *after*.

COMMENDATORY VERSES.

Page ccxxxix.

IF Poesy were not ravished so much,
And her compos'd rage held the simplest woodness.] *Woodness* is *madness*. *Wud* for *mad* is still in common use in Scotland. It is employed by Shakspeare in *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

P. cclx. *Zouch Townley.*] This gentleman wrote a very fine poem to his "confined friend Mr. Felton," for which he was summoned to the Star Chamber, but made his escape into France. It was at first imputed to Jonson. See *Preface*.

P. cclxviii.] Oldham's Ode ought to commence—

"Great thou! whom 'tis a crime almost to dare to praise,
Whose firm established and unshaken glories stand!"

P. cclxxi. *Conclusion of the Commendatory Verses.*] Here, or somewhere, should have been inserted the famous *Letter from Beaumont*, to which Gifford makes such frequent reference. Mr. Dyce prints lines 55 and 56:—

"Was able to make the two next companies
(Right witty though but down right fools) more wise;"

Digitized by Google

and appends a note to say, "The brackets which I have added will render the meaning of this passage clear." Seward printed—

"Was able to make the two next companies
Right witty: though but down right fools, meer wise."

And surely he was right. *Mere*, in the sense of *absolute, decided*, is familiar to every reader. What Beaumont meant to say is, that Jonson and his friends left behind them such an aroma of wit, that it was sufficient to render the two next ordinary companies "right witty;" and, even supposing one or both of those companies to have been composed of downright fools, the aroma was powerful enough to make them for the time appear models of wisdom. Mr. Dyce, on the contrary, makes Beaumont say that the two companies were "right witty though down-right fools," to commence with, and that under the influence of the aroma they became "more wise than down-right fools," which would have been worse company than before.

I have also annexed certain lines by Taylor the Water-poet, which Gifford speaks of with approbation, and must have accidentally omitted.

MASTER FRANCIS BEAUMONT'S LETTER TO BEN JONSON, WRITTEN BEFORE HE AND MASTER FLETCHER CAME TO LONDON, WITH TWO OF THE PRECEDENT COMEDIES, THEN NOT FINISHED, WHICH DEFERRED THEIR MERRY MEETINGS AT THE MERMAID.

The sun (which doth the greatest comfort bring
To absent friends, because the self-same thing
They know, they see, however absent) is
Here our best hay-maker (forgive me this;
It is our country's style:) in this warm shine
I lie, and dream of your full Mermaid wine.
Oh, we have water mixed with claret-lees,
Drink apt to bring in drier heresies
Than beer, good only for the sonnet's strain,
With fustian metaphors to stuff the brain;
So mixed that, given to the thirstiest one,
'Twill not prove alms, unless he have the stone:
I think with one draught man's invention fades,
Two cups had quite spoiled Homer's Iliads;
'Tis liquor that will find out Sutcliffe's wit;
Lie where he will, and make him write worse yet:
Filled with such moisture, in most grievous qualms,
Did Robert Wisdom write his singing psalms;
And so must I do this; and yet I think
It is a potion sent us down to drink
By special Providence, keeps us from fights,
Make us not laugh when we make legs to knights:

Digitized by Google

'Tis this that keeps our minds fit for our states,
A medicine to obey our magistrates;
For we do live more free than you; no hate,
No envy at one another's happy state,
Moves us; we are all equal every whit:
Of land, that God gives men here is their wit,
If we consider fully; for our best
And gravest man will with his main house-jest
Scarce please you; we want subtilty to do
The city tricks, lie, hate, and flatter too;
Here are none that can bear a painted show,
Strike when you wince, and then lament the blow:
Who, like mills set the right way for to grind,
Can make their gains alike with every wind;
Only some fellows, with the subtlest pate
Amongst us, may perchance equivocate
At selling of a horse, and that's the most.
Methinks the little wit I had is lost
Since I saw you; for wit is like a rest
Held up at tennis, which men do the best
With the best gamesters. What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life; then where there hath been thrown
Wit able enough to justify the town
For three days past: wit that might warrant be
For the whole city to talk foolishly,
Till that were cancelled; and when that was gone,
We left an air behind us, which alone
Was able to make the two next companies
Right witty; though but downright fools, mere wise;
When I remember this, and see that now
The country gentlemen begin to allow
My wit for dry bobs, then I needs must cry,
I see my days of ballating grow nigh;
I can already riddle, and can sing
Catches, sell bargains, and I fear shall bring
Myself to speak the hardest words I find
Over as oft as any, with one wind
That takes no medicines. But one thought of thee
Makes me remember all these things to be
The wit of our young men, fellows that shew
No part of good, yet utter all they know;

Digitized by Google

Who, like trees of the gard, have growing souls.
Only strong Destiny, which all controls,
I hope hath left a better fate in store
For me, thy friend, than to live ever poor,
Banished unto this home. Fate once again
Bring me to thee, who canst make smooth and plain
The way of knowledge for me, and then I,
Who have no good but in thy company,
Protest it will my greatest comfort be
To acknowledge all I have to flow from thee.
Ben, when these scenes are perfect, we'll taste wine;
I'll drink thy Muse's health, thou shalt quaff mine.

TO MY DEERE RESPECTED FRIEND, MAISTER BENIAMIN JOHNSON.

Thou canst not dye, for though the stroake of death
Deprives the world of thy worst earthly part:
Yet when thy corps hath banished thy breath,
Thy living Muse shall still declare thy Art.
The fatall Sisters and the blessed Graces,
  Were all thy friends at thy Nativitie;
And in thy mind the Muses took their places,
  Adoring thee with rare capacitie,
And all the Worthies of this worthy Land,
  Admire thy wondrous all-admired worth,
Then how should I that cannot understand
  Thy worth, thy worthinesse set forth?
Yet beare the boldnesse of the honest Sculler,
Whose worthlesse praise can fill thy praise no fuller.

JOHN TAYLOR.

Works, 1630 (*p.* 14).

Digitized by Google

PORTRAITS OF JONSON.

Page cclxxii.

LORD HARDWICK *has a portrait of Ben at his seat at Wimpole.*] This picture, by Cornelius Jansen, is the one, out of all those that have come under my notice, to which I give the preference. It has been most inadequately engraved, in Walker's series, although Charles Warren was employed upon it. It represents him with that "dark pale face," of which he himself speaks in the *Poetaster*, vol. ii. p. 521, and the expression is intellectual and full of dignity.

P. cclxxiii. *The confidence which the commentator here expresses.*] Had Gifford written this note, he would certainly have made great fun out of the passage in which George Steevens accuses Jonson of saying that the Droeshout portrait of Shakspeare was a good likeness, in order to make posterity think his rival was an ugly man! He "might not have been over-solicitous about the style in which Shakspeare's lineaments were transmitted to posterity.". *Shak. Var.* 1813, vol. i. p. 2.

P. cclxxiii. *The earliest and by far the most valuable is that by Vaughan.*] I quite agree with Octavius Gilchrist, but why does he omit that it is circumscribed VERA EFFIGIES DOCTISSIMI POETARUM ANGLORUM BEN. JOHNSONII, and that between the Latin lines, and the signature Ab. Holl. there is an English couplet:—

"O could there be an art found out that might
Produce his shape as lively as to Write."

His "hundred of grey hairs" are concealed by the laurel.

THE AUTOGRAPH OF JONSON.

Page cclxxv.

THE plainness of his handwriting is spoken of in the *Satiromastix*: "Thou writ'st in a most goodly big hand too: I like that: I read'st as *lea*geably as some that have bin sav'd by their neck-verse."

Digitized by Google

NOTES TO EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.

Page 2.

HUMOUR.] "Humour, in the ancient dramatic language, signified some peculiar or fantastic bias or habit of mind in an individual." Sir W. Scott. *Note to Dryden's Works*, xv. 352.

P. 2. *The first appearance—in* 1595 *or in* 1596.] Mr. Collier is of opinion that this play was not acted in any shape before 1598, as distinctly stated in the last leaf of the 1616 folio, which Gifford evidently considers to apply only to the revised version. *The Umers* noted by Henslowe, is believed to be *A pleasant Comedy entituled: An Humerous dayes Mirth*, by George Chapman, which was printed in 1599. On the 11th June, 1597, Chamberlaine writes to Carleton (*Cam. Soc.* 1861, p. 4), "We have here a new *play of humors* in very great request, and I was drawne along to it by the common applause, but my opinion of it is (as the fellow saide of the shearing of hogges,) that there was a great crie for so little wolle." I of course supposed that this was Jonson's, and pitied the bad taste of Mr. Chamberlaine, but as Chapman's title page of 1599 states that his play "had been several times acted by the *Ld Admiral his servants*," of which we have a list extending over this period, the probabilities are all in favour of that being the piece intended. There is no mistake, however, about the next extract of a letter from Tobie Mathew to sir Dudley Carleton, of 20th Sept. 1598. "An Almaine lost his purse and 300 crownes at the theatre, the play being *Every Man's Humour*."

P. 2. *Before it was purchased by the company at the* Globe, *it had undergone a variety of alterations.*] I am by no means convinced of this; indeed, if the latest critics are right about Henslowe's *Umers* being Chapman's, there can be no doubt that the Lord Chamberlain's servants acted this play in its Italianized form. Charles Lamb has a delightful note on this change of the names. "Heywood's plots are almost invariably English. I am sometimes jealous that Shakspeare laid so few of his scenes at home. I laud Ben Jonson, for that, in one instance, having framed the first draught of his *Every Man in his Humour* in Italy, he changed the scene and Anglicized his characters. The names of them in the First Edition may not be unamusing:

Digitized by Google

Men.

Lorenzo, sen.	Bobadilla (Bobadil).
Lorenzo, jun.	Musco.
Prospero.	Cob (the same in English).
Thorello.	Peto.
Stephano (Master Stephen).	Pizo.
Dr. Clement (Justice Clement).	Matheo (Master Mathew).

Women.

Guilliana.	Hesperida.
Biancha.	Tib (the same in English).

"How say you, reader? Do not Master Kitely, Mistress Kitely, Master Knowell, Brainworm, &c., read better than these Cisalpines?"

P. 2. *The 4to edition appeared in* 1603.] The 4to edition appeared in 1601, and is published by the same man, and spells the author's name in the same way as the 1601 4to of *Cynthia's Revels*, about the genuineness of which Gifford makes no difficulty! What is more important still it has the same motto, of which Gifford takes no notice, but which must have been Jonson's own selection. I beg to call the reader's attention to the first line, which was omitted in the folio of 1616.

> "Quod non dant proceres, dabit HISTRIO.
> Haud tamen invideas Vati, quem pulpita pascunt."

These are two detached lines in Juvenal's seventh *Satire*, and are translated by Gifford—

> "An actor's patronage a peer's outgoes,
> And what the last withholds, the first bestows!"

and

> "Yet envy not the man who earns hard bread
> By Tragedy."

P. 2. *Appropriate the characters to the names.*] What would we not give to ascertain the part played by Shakspeare? The following note by Mr. Collier is well worthy of attention:—"Having so long made this subject my study, and having obtained some little insight into the peculiar qualifications of the representatives of the personages in *Every Man in his Humour*, I may perhaps be allowed to subjoin my notions (which of course are merely conjectural,) upon the point. At the end of Ben Jonson's edition of the comedy, in 1616, the names of the ten 'principal comedians' are placed in double columns, but I have arranged them in one column, probably in the order intended by the poet.

Digitized by Google

Knowell	Will. Shakespeare.
Kitely	Ric. Burbadge.
Brayne-worm . . .	Aug. Philips.
Downe-right . . .	Joh: Hemings.
Cap. Bobadil . . .	Hen. Condel.
Just. Clement . . .	Tho. Pope.
Mr. Stephen . . .	Will. Kempe.
Mr. Matthew . . .	Will. Slye.
Dame Kitely . . .	Chr. Beeston.
Tib	Joh. Duke.

"I have spelt the names of the characters and actors precisely as they were given by Ben Jonson, for I have little doubt that he superintended the printing of the folio of his works in 1616." *Memoirs of the Principal Actors in the Plays of Shakspeare*, p. 133, note. It will be observed that Mr. Collier assigns no name to the part of E. Knowell.

P. 4. *Prologue.*] Gifford says, vol. iii. p. 2, that the groundwork for this admirable prologue is founded on the lines from *Martial*, which he took for the motto of *Sejanus*.

P. 4. *To make a child. . . .* proceed man.] This use of the word proceed is now confined to the Universities. Jonson employs it frequently.

P. 4. *Help of some* foot and half-foot words.] In the *Ars Poetica*, vol. ix. p. 87, Jonson translates *sesquipedalia verba* in the same way:

"Their bombard-phrase, and foot and half-foot words."

P. 6. *A water-bearer.*] Thomas Becon, the great reformer, in his preface of 1561, p. 8, has, "Who, having a diseased horse, runneth unto a tailor? or who, being sick, seeketh counsel for the recovery of his health from a *water-tankard-bearer?*"

P. 9. *Note* 3, *Hawking.*] Gifford in all probability never saw this sport. Jonson himself, which is more to the purpose, was fond of it, and saw reasons why wise men should love it. See *Epigram* lxxxv. vol. 8, p. 188.

P. 13. *You peremptory* gull.] This word was used by Thomas Becon so early as 1540. "What dicing, carding, and all kind of voluptuous riot is used among them. What drinking, *gulling*, quaffing, and superfluous banqueting do they use?" *Works*, p. 251. *Parker Soc.*

Digitized by Google

P. 15. *Dost thou think us all Jews that* inhabit *there.*] This seems to support the reading of the much-disputed passage in *Macbeth*, A. iii. S. 4:

> "If trembling I *inhabit* then, protest me
> The baby of a girl." See also *post*, p. 26.

P. 20. *Prithee, help to* truss *me a little.*] To *truss* was to tie the strings which answered the purpose of buttons. See Gifford's long note to the *Poetaster* (A. iii. S. 1), vol. ii. p. 424.

P. 20. *Silk hose.*] For the importance attached to silk hose, see also *Cynthia's Revels* (A. ii. S. 1), vol. ii. p. 249, "the first Sunday of his silk stockings."

P. 21. *Costermonger.*] Jonson spells it properly costarmonger. Gifford retains this in the *Alchemist* (A. iv. S. 1), vol. iv. p. 114, and in *Bartholomew Fair* (A. ii. S. 1), vol. iv. p. 385, prints it costard-monger, which is more correct still.

P. 22. *Crossing over the fields to Moorgate.*] Jonson spells it Moregate, which shows the pronunciation. It was a postern in the old wall of London, and removed finally in 1760.

P. 23. *A tankard-bearer.*] In the play of *Eastward Hoe*, A. i. S. 1, which was partly written by Jonson, we have, "Wilt thou crie 'What is't ye lack?' stand with a bare pate and a dropping nose, under a wooden pent-house, and art a gentleman? Wilt thou *beare tankards* and mayst beare armes?"

P. 24. *A milliner's wife.*] Milliners were then of the male sex. Hotspur described a certain lord as being "perfumed like a milliner." The name was derived from Milan, the original seat of the profession, and Jonson spells the word *millaners*. He also spells "cyprus" cypresse.

P. 25. *Melancholy and gentlemanlike.*] See *post*, p. 63. "Your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir."

P. 27. *The harrot's book.*] Jonson was fond of this word. Juniper in the *Case is Altered* (A. iv. S. 4), vol. vi. p. 371, says, "Let's use the commiseration of some harrot of arms, he shall give us a gudgeon."

P. 27. *His* cob, *&c.*] In *Catiline* (A. ii. S. 1), vol. iv. p. 223, Jonson has:

> "I'm not taken
> With a *cob-swan*, or a high-mounting bull,
> As foolish Leda and Europa were."

Digitized by Google

P. 30. *Poetrie, poetrie, and speaking of interludes*]. In the folio this stands, "Poyetrie, poyetrie, and speaking of enterludes." I have no doubt Jonson called a Poet a Poyet, as the Greeks did, and the Scotch do.

P. 30. *I shall have it, he says, the next* action.] Gifford connects this word *action* with the *services* spoken of in the description of Shift in the dramatis personæ of the next play. See vol. ii. p. 8. I do not myself see the connection. It appears to me as if, in our modern language, Bobadil had said, "You shall have it the very first opening I have for my skill and valour." In the *Satiromastix* (ii. 221), Tucca says, "When the next *action* is layde upon me thou shalt be Ladified."

P. 32. *I resolve so.*] Gifford makes reference to his edition of Massinger as if it was always at everybody's right hand. "'Tis his hand, I'm resolved of it," is the expression in the *Duke of Milan*. The phrase, however, must have been considered just a little affected by Jonson himself, for in the *Silent Woman* (A. iii. S. 1), vol. iii. p. 383, Mrs. Otter says, "He departed straight, I can resolve you," and Dauphine remarks, "What an excellent choice phrase this lady expresses in!"

P. 34. *I happened to enter into some discourse of a* hanger.] These are now called *slings* or *frogs*, according as the sword is worn free, or close to the side. In the next play, vol. ii. p. 81 and p. 194, the garters of ladies are mentioned as being appropriated to this purpose.

P. 35. *A most proper and sufficient dependance.*] In this note of Gifford's the reference should be to the *Devil's an Ass* (A. iv. S. 3), vol. v. p. 118, and the *New Inn*, vol. v. p. 339. In *Love's Pilgrimage*, Eugenia, the daughter of the Governor of Barcelona, claims Caranza as a relation:—

> "If you mean him that writ upon the duel,
> He was my kinsman." A. v. S. 4.

P. 36. Accommodate *us with another* bed-staff.] The other "perfumed words" which Jonson couples with *accommodation* are *complement* and *spirit*. See vol. ix. p. 209. I shall have to speak of bed-staffs in a note on the *Staple of News*, vol. v. p. 283.

P. 37. *But one* venue, *sir.*] We should now, I presume, use the word *hit* instead of either *venue* or *stoccata;* so indeed did that great fencing authority Osric, in *Hamlet*, when he called out, "A hit, a very palpable hit!" The folio has *passada*, not *passado*.

Digitized by Google

P. 39. *Bred him at the Hospital.*] In the *New Inn* (A. iv. S. 2), vol. v. p. 375, we have—

> "Some foundling in a stall, or the church-porch,
> Brought up in the hospital."

The authors of the *Widow* were Jonson, Middleton, and *Fletcher*, not Massinger.

P. 42. *Claps his dish at the wrong man's door.*] Cotgrave has "*Cliquet*, a lazer's clicket or clapper," and "*Cliquette*, a clicket or clapper, such as lazers carry about with them."

P. 43. *And savour less of* stomach.] Old Thomas Becon (*temp.* Edward VI.) in his preface to the *Policy of War*, writes of "a lusty heart and frank courageous stomach."

P. 44. *Shining shoes.*] D'Avenant, in his *News from Plimouth*, A. iii. S. 1, has—

> "The shops were opened long before,
> And youngest Prentice goes,
> To lay at Mrs. chamber door
> His master's *shining shoes*."

P. 46. *Swinge the whole* gang *of 'em.*] Jonson wrote *ging*, not *gang*, and Gifford ought not to have altered it (see his note, vol. iv. p. 152, where he calls attention to his retaining it). Jonson employs it again in the *New Inn* (A. i. S. 1), vol. v. p. 319, where Gifford also retains it. It was generally used in a better and merrier sense than *gang*. Dekker, in the *Roaring Girl*, has: "Heere's such a merry ging, I could find in my heart to saile to the world's end with such company;" and Middleton, in the *Spanish Gipsy* (Dyce, iv. 141), has these joyous lines—

> "Welcome, poet, to our ging!
> Make rhymes, we'll give the reason,
> Canary bees thy brains shall sting,
> Mull sack did ne'er speak treason."

In the quarto, 1601, the expression is: "Swinge the whole *nest* of 'em."

P. 50. *Follow my master, dryfoot.*] I suppose Gifford is right here, for, in the ordinary meaning of the word, the task would have been one of some difficulty, Moorfields being in truth a fen, which was only dry when frozen over. Fitzstephen calls it *palus illa magna*, and describes the youth of London tying mutton bones to their feet and skating over it. One of the authors of *Eastward Hoe* (Jonson himself, I suspect) gives a vivid description of the sort of beggar found in this place: "Methinkes I see thee alreadie walking

Digitized by Google

in Moore Fields, without a cloake, with halfe a hat, without a band, a doublet with three buttons, without a girdle, a hose with one point and no garter, with a cudgell under thine arm, begging and borrowing three pence." A. i. S. 1.

P. 54. *Against a* buffoon.] The folio has, "against a *buffon*," a common way of spelling the word at the time, and in this place required by the rhythm.

P. 54. *When I was young, &c.*] The passage is in the early part of the thirteenth *Satire*, and Gifford, after quoting it, exclaims: "*The strain I heard was of a higher mood!* this is indeed what Dryden, in his remarks on Jonson, calls *invading the ancients like a monarch*, it is not a theft but a victory." Gifford's *Juvenal*, vol. ii. p. 120.

P. 55. *The father's* darling.] In the original *dearling*, a word greatly to be preferred. Archdeacon Nares, *sub voce*, writes as if this form was peculiar to Spenser. Gifford made the same change, vol. iii. p. 175.

P. 59. *The musters at Mile-end.*] See *post*, p. 111. Mile-end had always been the Campus Martius of London. Mistress Merryweather, in the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, says: "I can assure thee, Michael, Mile-end is a goodly matter, there has been a pitch-field." Dyce's *Beaumont and Fletcher*, ii. 156.

P. 59. *Counterfeit and slip.*] Besides the note to the *Magnetic Lady*, vol. vi. p. 71, the reader should look at the *Underwoods*, No. lxiii. vol. viii. p. 413:

> "First weigh a friend, then touch and try him too:
> For there are many *slips* and *counterfeits*."

P. 60. *Faces about!*] The necessity of a word on this familiar phrase seems curious to a man of my profession. It is as well, however, to support Gifford from the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*: "Soft and fair, gentlemen! soft and fair! Double your files! As you were! Faces about!" Dyce's *Beaumont and Fletcher*, vol. ii. p. 220.

P. 61. *Mistaken my father for me.*] *Mistane* in the folio. Gifford surely was *mistane* when he changed it.

P. 65. *Discharged my petronel in his bosom.*] The folio has *petrionel*, and in the next play, vol. ii. p. 178, where a "case" of these weapons is spoken of, Gifford is careful to preserve the spelling. A petrionel is a horse-pistol.

Digitized by Google

P. 66. *Poor provant rapier.*] This would now be called a "sword out of the stores." D'Avenant speaks in the same way of a "dull ammunition blade."

P. 68. *I can compare him to nothing more happily than a* drum.] In the first edition the instrument was a "barber's virginals," which it was the custom for anyone to play upon who was waiting to be shaved. The instrument more generally kept for this purpose was a cittern. We are less musical in the present age, and a newspaper is the resource under similar circumstances.

P. 69. *At justice Clement's house, in Coleman Street.*] This famous old street, which runs from Old Jewry into Cripplegate, has many claims on our notice. In particular, in the very year in which this play was produced, the illustrious Francis Bacon, when arrested by a goldsmith near Lombard Street, writes: "He would have urged it to have had me in prison; which he had done, had not Sheriff More to whom I sent, quietly recommended me to an handsome house in Coleman Street, where I am." To Lord Keeper Egerton, 24th Sept. 1598. It was also the scene of Cowley's play, *Cutter of Coleman Street.*

P. 79. *Sir Bevis his horse.*] This romance must have been a favourite with Jonson, as it was with Bunyan. We have previously (p. 65) had the sword Morglay, and the horse Arundel appears again in No. lxxi. of the *Underwoods*, vol. viii. p. 428:

> "Or what we hear our home-born legend tell
> Of bold Sir Bevis and his Arundel."

The romance is given in a very spirited fashion by George Ellis, in his *Specimens.*

P. 79. *They are of a Flemish breed . . . . for they* raven up *more* butter.] The passion of the Flemings for butter is constantly in the mouths of the old dramatists. The use of *up* after a word is now almost exploded, except in the cases of *eat up, swallow up, drink up*, but Brome has *kiss up*, and at p. 116 *post*, Bobadill *kills up*, by computation, an entire army. *Ravin up* is used by Shakspeare in *Macbeth*, and by D'Avenant.

P. 79. *Eat my own flesh and blood.*] The folio has *fish* and blood.

P. 80. *Fasting-days.*] The real object was to keep up the breed of seamen in readiness for war. But the reasons publicly assigned were that, "by eating of fish much flesh was saved to the country," and that "due and godly abstinence from flesh was a means to virtue." See Froude's *History*, ch. 25.

Digitized by Google

P. 80. *An' I might have been join'd patten.*] I can only guess at the meaning of this phrase. It was an age of *patents*, and I fancy Knowell meant, "not only if it had secured me a share in the monopoly of wisdom for the future."

P. 81. *A shove-groat shilling.*] So Dekker, in the *Roaring Girle:* "And away slid I, my man, like a shovell-board shilling."

P. 83. *He* is *a very strange presence.*] The folio properly reads *has* instead of *is;* and in the next speech, "*of* one shoulder" instead of *on.*

P. 84. *The world shall not* reprove.] Reprove also did duty for *disprove* or *refute.* Jonson, in *Sejanus*, vol. iii. p. 54, and the *Fox*, vol. iii. p. 273, uses *unreproved* in the same sense as Horatio's *unimproved.*

P. 86. *Bobadill beats him.*] The folio adds, "with a cudgel."

P. 87. *The most divine tobacco that ever I drunk.*] The Indians, i. e. the Orientals, still call it *drinking* tobacco. Ford avails himself very skilfully of this expression:

> "They that will learn to drink a health in hell
> Must learn on earth to take tobacco well,
> To take tobacco well, to take tobacco well,
> For in hell they drink nor wine, nor ale, nor beer,
> But fire and smoke and stench as we do here."
>
> *The Lover's Melancholy*, ed. Dyce, i. 66.

P. 91. *My wife has lent him her smock off her back while his* own *shirt has been* at *washing.*] The folio has "*one* shirt," which, of course, is the right reading.

P. 99. *He shakes his head.*] What Junius says is: "I wish the honourable gentleman instead of shaking his head, would shake something out of it." The form in which it has been employed in our day is: "The honourable gentleman shakes his head, but there's nothing in it."

P. 101. *Begg'd for a concealment.*] So in the *Honest Man's Fortune* (Dyce's *Beaumont and Fletcher*, vol. iii. p. 449):

> "Their penance, sir, I'll undertake, so please you,
> To grant me one concealment."

P. 102. *The book he had it out of cost him a* teston *at least.*] The *teston*, when Elizabeth came to the throne, had sunk as low as twopence farthing. See note to vol. ii. p. 108.

P. 103. *You whoreson bragging* coystril.] Gifford's view has been disputed. Cotgrave gives a knight's attendant as one meaning of

Digitized by Google

coustillier, but the others are "a groom of a stable, a horsekeeper." Nares, whose authority is higher than Gifford's in such matters, is quite clear that it has nothing to do with *kestrel*. Malone, in a note on *Pericles*, says, "Coysterel is properly a wine vessel."

P. 104. *Who* enforced *this brawl?*] i. e. whose violence produced this brawl. *To enforce* was to force with more than ordinary strength. So Chapman, in *Widow's Tears*, vol. iii. p. 16:

"Thou liest, base asse! One man enforce a guard!"

P. 104. *Songs and sonnets, his fellow.*] I am persuaded this ought to be printed, "and Songs-and-Sonnets, his fellow," a nickname for him whom he had just before called "Sirrah, you ballad singer!"

P. 104. Down. *Respect! what talk you of respect, &c.*] In the folio this is printed as verse, and I have no doubt Jonson so intended it:

"Respect! what talk you of respect 'mong such
As have nor spark of manhood nor good manners,
'Sdeynes I am ashamed to hear you! Respect!"

P. 110. *Made an* anatomy *of me.*] Richardson says: "Anatomy in old writers is sometimes applied to a thing anatomized or dissected, or having the appearance of being so; of being stripped of flesh."

P. 110. *A* bottom *of packthread,*] i. e. a ball. Peter Levyns, in the *Manipulus Vocabulorum* (1570), has, "Botom of yarne, *glomus*," and Cooper (*Thesaurus*, 1587) has, "*Glomus*, a botome of threade."

P. 110. Much *wench, or* much *son.*] There is a vulgar exclamation, "A fat lot!" which represents precisely the same idea.

P. 111. *A pottle of wine.*] A pottle was a measure of two quarts. Shakspeare talks of "potations pottle-deep," and "pottle draughts" was a common expression.

P. 115. *Your montanto.*] It is worth while mentioning that Beatrice calls Benedick "Signior Montanto."

P. 116. Kills them all up *by computation.*] For *kill up* see *ante*, note to p. 79, and vol. ii. p. 43.

P. 118. *I was* struck *with a planet.*] Jonson invariably, I think, wrote the fine old form of *strook* instead of *struck*. Gifford corrects him in the earlier volumes, but allowed it to stand in the later ones.

P. 120. *Civil war without adjection.*] Samuel Johnson defines "Adjection—the art of adjecting or adding." It occurs again in *Cynthia's Revels*, vol. ii. p. 271.

Digitized by Google

P. 121. *Bestow the grist on me.*] This phrase was evidently equivalent to the "stand treat" of the present day.

P. 123. *Ceruse.*] See Jonson's own note to *Sejanus*, A. ii. S. 1: "Cerussa (apud Romanos) inter fictitiores colores erat et quæ solem ob calorem timebat." Vol. iii. p. 41.

P. 124. *Marry, of the* squire.] Apple-squire was the common form. See my note to p. 132 *post.*

P. 125. *Oh that villain* dors *me. Note* 6.] *Humming* has gone the way of all flesh. Our present *humbugging* is its collateral descendant and heir. Beaumont and Fletcher were also fond of the word *dor:*

> "And I another. I will never bear this,
> Never endure the *dor.*" Dyce's *B. and F.* vii. 48.

P. 127. *This jewel in my ear.*] The Chandos portrait of Shakspeare, whomsoever it may represent, is a painting of the period, and has rings in its ears. There is also a portrait of Raleigh similarly disfigured.

P. 129. *The female* copesmate *of my son,*] i. e. friend or companion of my son. Grose says that the term in his time was still in use in the north of England, and Gifford, who was bred in the south, thought it required no note. I scarcely think it is heard anywhere now.

P. 132. *Well, good wife bawd.*] In the folio the last word is printed in towering capitals, thus: "Well good wife BA'D," which makes it evident that a pun was intended.

P. 132. *That make your husband such a* hoddy-doddy.] This word is found in Kemp's *Nine Days' Wonder*, p. 21: "All his anger turned to laughter, swearing it did him good to have ill words of a *hoddy doddy*, a habber de hoy, a chicken, a squib, a squall," &c. It is also used by Swift in *Mary the Cook's Letter to Dr. Sheridan:* "He has more goodness in his little finger than you have in your whole body. My master is a personable man, and not a spindle-shanked *hoddy doddy.*"

P. 132. *And you, young apple-squire, and old cuckold-maker.*] An *apple-squire* was a pander. "Of her gentleman usher I became her *apple-squire* to hold the door and keep centinel at taverns." *Old Plays*, ix. 162. Sometimes it was *pippin-squire:*

> "Lord who would take him for a *pippin-squire,*
> That's so bedaubed with lace and rich attire?
> Can the damn'd windfals of base baudery
> Maintain the slave in this rich brodery?"
> *Taylor the Water Poet*, Ep. xviii. p. 23.

And sometimes *Apple John.* See vol. ii. p. 87.

Digitized by Google

P. 133. *Was never man so wrong'd!*] The folio has, "Never was man so wronged," and just below the word "do" is inserted before "You let them lie open for all comers." Still lower, "cuckoldy" is "cuckoldly."

P. 139. *Why, when, knaves?*] At the present time the Scotch say, "Eh, what?" on every possible occasion. Rousseau tells us that when he insisted on embracing David Hume in the middle of Buckingham Street, in the Strand, "suffoqué de sanglots, inondé de larmes," the Caledonian philosopher only answered, "Quoi! mon cher monsieur. Eh! mon cher monsieur! Quoi donc! mon cher monsieur!"

P. 143. *With my cousin Edward and* I.] Instead of "my cousin Edward and *me*." No writer was ever more particular in this way than Jonson, so that this must have been the recognized form of the day. See another instance, vol. ii. p. 229.

P. 146. *A whole* realm, *a commonwealth of paper.*] *Realm* was pronounced *ream*, and formed a constant subject for this kind of wit. So Marlowe in the *Jew of Malta:* "Give me a *ream* of paper, we'll have a *kingdom* of gold for it."

P. 146. *How! this is stolen.*] Jonson told Drummond that "Daniel was at jealousies with him." Vol. ix. p. 378. See also Gifford's note, vol. viii. p. 270, where Jonson, speaking of Daniel, calls him "a better verser,"

> "Or poet in the court-account than I,
> And who doth me, though I not him, envý."

Digitized by Google

SUBJOINED is the First Act of the original *Every Man in his Humour*, before the scene was shifted to England, and the names Anglicized. This is the title-page:

"EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOR

As it hath beene sundry times publickly acted by the right Honorable the Lord Chamberlaine his servants.

Written by Ben Jonson.

Quod non dant proceres, dabit Histrio.
Haud tamen invidias, quem pulpita pascunt.

Imprinted at London for Walter Burre, and are to be sould at his shoppe in Paules Church yarde. 1601."

The number and names of the actors.

Lorenzo senior.	Giulliano.
Prospero.	Lorenzo junior.
Thorello.	Biancha.
Stephano.	Hesperida.
Doctor Clement.	Peto.
Bobadilla.	Matheo.
Musco.	Pizo.
Cob.	Tib.

Digitized by Google

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOR.

ACTUS PRIMUS. SCENA PRIMA.

Enter LORENZO DI PAZZI Senior, MUSCO.

Lorenzo senior.

NOW, trust me, here's a goodly day toward. Musco, call up my sonne, Lorenzo: bid him rise, tell him, I have some businesse to imploy him in.

Mus. I will, sir, presently.

Lor. se. But heare you, sirrah;
If he be at study, disturbe him not.

Mus. Very good, sir. [*Exit* MUSCO.

Lor. se. How happy would I estimate myselfe,
Could I (by any meane) retyre my sonne
From one vayne course of study he affects?
He is a scholler (if a man may trust
The lib'rall voyce of double-toung'd report)
Of deare account, in all our *Academies.*
Yet this position must not breede in me
A fast opinion that he cannot erre.
Myselfe was once a *student,* and indeede
Fed with the self-same humor he is now,
Dreaming on nought but idle *Poetrie:*
But since Experience hath awakt my spirits,

Enter STEPHANO.

And reason taught them, how to comprehend
The soveraigne use of study. What, cousin Stephano?
What newes with you, that you are here so earely?

Step. Nothing: but e'ene come to see how you doe, uncle.

Lor. se. That's kindly done. You are welcome, cousin.

Step. I, I know that, sir, I would not have come else: how doeth my cousin, uncle?

Lor. se. Oh, well, well, goe in and see; I doubt hee's scarce stirring yet.

Step. Uncle, afore I goe in, can you tell me, and he have e're a booke of the sciences of hawking and hunting. I would fayne borrow it.

Lor. se. Why I hope you will not a hawking now, will you?

Step. No wusse; but Ile practise against next yeare: I have bought me a hawke, and bels and all, I lacke nothing but a booke to keepe it by.

Digitized by Google

Lor. se. Oh, most ridiculous.

Step. Nay, looke you now, you are angrie, uncle, why you know, and a man have not skill in hawking and hunting now a daies, ile not give a rush for him, hee is for no gentleman's company, and (by God's will) I scorne it. I, so I doe to be a consort for every *hum-drum*, hang them *scroiles*, there's nothing in them in the world, what doe you talke on it? A gentleman must shew himselfe like a gentleman. Uncle I pray you, be not angrie. I know what I have to do, I trow; I am no novice.

Lor. se. Go to, you are a prodigal, and selfe-wild foole,
Nay, never looke at me, it's I that speake,
Take't as you will, ile not flatter you.
What? have you not means inow to wast
That which your friends have left you, but you must
Go cast away your money on a *Buzzard*,
And know not how to keepe it when you have done?
Oh, it's brave, this will make you a gentleman,
Well, cosen, well, I see you are e'ene past hope
Of all reclaime; I so, now you are told on it, you looke another way.

Step. What would you have me do, trow?

Lor. se. What would I have you do? mary,
Learne to be wise, and practise how to thrive,
That I would have you do, and not to spend
Your crownes on everie one that humors you:
I would not have you to intrude yourselfe
In everie gentleman's societie,
Till their affections or your owne desert,
Do worthily invite you to the place.
For he that's so respectlesse in his course,
Oft sels his reputation vile and cheape,
Let not your cariage and behaviour taste
Of affectation, lest while you pretend
To make a blaze of gentrie to the world
A little puffe of scorne extinguish it,
And you be left like an unsavourie snuffe,
Whose propertie is only to offend.
Cosen, lay by such superficiall formes,
And entertaine a perfect reall substance,
Stand not so much on your gentility,

Enter a Serving-man.

But moderate your expenses (now at first)
As you may keepe the same proportion still,
Beare a low saile: soft, who's this comes here.

Ser. Gentlemen, God save you.

Step. Welcome, good friend, we doe not stand much upon our

Digitized by Google

gentilitie; yet I can assure you mine uncle is a man of a thousand pounde land a yeare: hee hath but one sonne in the world; I am his next heire, as simple as I stand here, if my cosen die; I have a faire living of mine owne too beside.

Ser. In good time, sir.

Step. In good time, sir? You do not flout, do you?

Ser. Not I, sir.

Step. And you should, here be them can perceive it, and that quickly too. Go too, and they can give it againe soundly, and need be.

Ser. Why, sir, let this satisfie you. Good faith, I had no such intent.

Step. By God, and I thought you had sir, I would talke with you.

Ser. So you may, sir, and at your pleasure.

Step. And so I would, sir, and you were out of mine uncle's ground, I can tell you.

Lor. se. Why, how now, cosen, will this never be left?

Step. Horson, base fellow, by God's lid, and 'twere not for shame, I would.

Lor. se. What would you do? you peremptorie Asse.
And yowle not be quiet, get you hence.
You see the gentleman contaynes himselfe
In modest limits, giving no reply
To your unseason'd, rude comparatives;
Yet yowle demeane yourselfe, without respect
Eyther of duty or humanity.
Goe get you in: fore God I am asham'd [*Exit* STEPHANO.
Thou hast a kinsman's interest in me.

Ser. I pray you, sir, is this *Pazzi* house?

Lor. se. Yes, mary is it, sir.

Ser. I should enquire for a gentleman here, one *Signior Lorenzo di Pazzi;* doe you know any such, sir, I pray you?

Lor. se. Yes, sir, or else I should forget my selfe.

Ser. I crye you mercy, sir, I was requested by a gentleman of Florence (having some occasion to ride this way) to deliver you this letter.

Lor. se. To me, sir? What doe you meane? I pray you remember your curt'sy.

To his deare and most elected friend, Signior Lorenzo di Pazzi.

What might the gentleman's name be, sir, that sent it? Nay, pray you be cover'd.

Ser. Signior *Prospero.*

Lor. se. Signior Prospero? A young gentleman of the family of *Strozzi* is he not?

Ser. I, sir, the same; Signior Thorello, the rich Florentine merchant, married his sister.

Digitized by Google

Enter MUSCO.

Lor. se. You say very true. *Musco.*
Mus. Sir.
Lor. se. Make this gentleman drinke, here,
I pray you goe in, sir, and 't please you. [*Exeunt.*
Now (without doubt) this letter's to my sonne.
Well: all is one; Ile be so bold as reade it,
Be it but for the *styles* sake, and the *phrase;*
Both which (I doe presume) are excellent,
And greatly varied from the vulgar forme,
If Prospero's invention gave them life.
How now? what stuff is here?

"Sirha Lorenzo, I muse we cannot see that at Florence: S'blood, I doubt Apollo hath got thee to be his Ingle, that thou commest not abroad to visit thine old friends: well, take heede of him, hee may doe somewhat for his household servants or so. But for his Retayners I have knowne some of them that have followed him three, foure, five yeere together scorning the world with their bare heeles, and at length been glad for a shift (though no cleane shift), to lye a whole winter in halfe a sheete, cursing Charles' wayne, and the rest of the starres intolerably. But (quis contra divos) well; Sirha, sweet villayne, come and see me: but spend one minute in my company, and 'tis enough: I think I have a world of good Jests for thee. Oh, sirha, I can shew thee two of the most perfect, rare, and absolute true Gulls, that ever thou saw'st, if thou wilt come. S'blood, invent some famous memorable lye or other, to slap thy father in the mouth with all; thou hast been father of a thousand in thy dayes, thou couldst be no Poet else: any scirvy roguish excuse will serve; say thou com'st but to fetch wooll for thine, Inke horne, and then too thy Father will say thy wits are a wooll-gathering. But its no matter: the worse the better. Anything is good inough for the old man. Sirha, how if thy Father should see this now? I, what would he thinke of me? Well (however I write to thee) I reverence him in my soule for the generall good all Florence delivers of him. Lorenzo, I conjure thee (by what, let me see) by the depth of our love, by all the strange sights we have seen in our dayes (I, or nights eyther) to come to me at Florence this day. Go to, you shall come, and let your muses go spinne for once. If thou wilt, s'hart, what's your god's name? Apollo? I, Apollo. If this melancholy rogue (Lorenzo here) doe not come, graunt that he doe not turne Foole presently, and never hereafter be able to make a good Iest, or a blanke verse, but live in more penurie of wit and Invention, than either the *Hall Beadle* or *Poet Nuntius.*"

Digitized by Google

Well, it is the strangest letter that ever I read.
Is this the man my sonne (so oft) hath prays'd
To be the happiest and most pretious wit
That ever was familiar with Art.
Now (by our Ladies blessed sonne) I sweare,
I rather thinke him most unfortunate
In the possession of such holy giftes,
Being the master of so loose a spirit.
Why what unhallowed ruffian would have writ,
With so prophane a pen unto his friend?
The modest paper e'ene lookes pale for griefe,
To feele her virgin cheeke defilde and stain'd
With such a blacke and criminall *inscription*.
Well, I had thought my son could not have straied
So farre from judgement, as to mart himselfe
Thus cheapely (in the open trade of scorne)
To geering *follie* and fantantisque *humour*.
But now I see *opinion* is a foole
And hath abusde my sences. *Musco.*

Enter MUSCO.

Mus. Sir.
Lor. se. What, is the fellow gone that brought this letter?
Mus. Yes, sir, a prettie while since.
Lor. se. And where's Lorenzo?
Mus. In his chamber, sir.
Lor. se. He spake not with the fellow, did he?
Mus. No, sir; he saw him not.
Lor. se. Then, *Musco*, take this letter and deliver it unto *Lorenzo*; but, sirra (on your life) take you no knowledge I have open'd it.
Mus. O Lord, sir, that were a jest indeed. [*Exit* MUSCO.
Lor. se. I am resolv'd I will not crosse his journey,
Nor will I practise any violent meane
To stay the hot and lustie course of youth,
For youth restraind straight growes impatient,
And (in condition) like an eager dogge,
Who (ne're so little from his game witheld)
Turnes head and leapes up at his masters throat.
Therefore ile studie (by some milder drift)
To call my sonne unto a happier shrift. [*Exit.*

SCENA SECUNDA.

Enter LORENZO Junior, *with* MUSCO.

Mus. Yes, sir, (on my word) he open'd it, and read the contents.
Lor. ju. It scarce contents me that he did so. But *Musco*,

Digitized by Google

didst thou observe his countenance in the reading of it, whether hee were angrie or pleasde?

Mus. Why, sir, I saw him not reade it.

Lor. ju. No? how knowest thou then that he open'd it?

Mus. Marry, sir, because he charg'd mee (on my life) to tell no body that he open'd it, which (unlesse he had done) he wold never feare to have it reveald.

Lor. ju. That's true: well, *Musco*, hie thee in againe,
Least my protracted absence do lend light,

Enter STEPHANO.

To darke suspition; *Musco*, be assurde,
I'le not forget this thy respective love.

Step. Oh, *Musco*, didst thou not see a fellow here in a what-sha-callum doublet; he brought mine uncle a letter even now.

Mus. Yes, sir, what of him?

Step. Where is he? Canst thou tell?

Mus. Why he is gone.

Step. Gone? Which way? when went he? how long since?

Mus. It's almost halfe an houre ago since he rid hence.

Step. Horson Scanderbag rogue, oh that I had a horse, by Gods lidde i'de fetch him backe againe, with heave and ho.

Mus. Why, you may have my masters bay gelding, and you will.

Step. But I have no boots, that's the spite on it.

Mus. Then its no boot to follow him. Let him go and hang, sir.

Step. I, by my troth; *Musco*, I pray thee help to trusse me a little; nothing angers mee, but I have waited such a while for him all unlac'd and untrust yonder, and now to see hee is gone the other way.

Mus. Nay, I pray you, stand still, sir.

Step. I will, I will: oh, how it vexes me.

Mus. Tut, never vexe yourselfe with the thought of such a base fellow as he.

Step. Nay, to see, he stood upon poynts with me, too.

Mus. Like inough so; that was because he saw you had so fewe at your hose.

Step. What? Hast thou done? God-a-mercy, good Musco.

Mus. I marle, sir, you weare such ill-favourd, course stockings, having so good a legge as you have.

Step. Fo, the stockings be good inough for this time of the yeere; but Ile have a payre of silke, e're it be long: I thinke my legge would shewe well in a silke hose.

Mus. I, afore God would it; rarely well.

Step. In sadnesse, I thinke it would: I have a reasonable good legge.

Digitized by Google

Mus. You have an excellent good legge, sir. I pray you pardon me, I have a little haste in, sir.

Step. A thousand thankes, good Musco. [*Exit* MUSCO. What, I hope he laughs not at me; and he doe——

Lor. ju. Here is a *style* indeed, for a man's sences to leap over, e're they come at it: why it is able to break the shinnes of any old mans patience in the world. My father reade this with patience? Then I will be made an *Eunuch*, and learne to sing Ballads. I doe not deny but my father may have as much patience as any other man: for hee uses to take phisike, and oft taking phisike makes a man a very patient creature. But, Signior *Prospero*, had your swaggering *Epistle* here, arrived in my father's hands at such an hour of his patience, (I meane, when hee had tane phisike) it is to be doubted whether I should have read *sweet villayne here.* But, what? My wise cousin; nay, then, Ile furnish our feast with one Gull more toward a Messe: hee writes to mee of two, and here's one, that's three, I fayth. Oh for a fourth: now *Fortune*, or never *Fortune.*

Step. Oh, now I see who he laught at: hee laught at somebody in that letter. By this good light, and he had laught at me, I would have told mine uncle.

Lor. ju. Cousin Stephano: good morrow, good cousin, how fare you?

Step. The better for your asking, I will assure you. I have beene all about to seeke you; since I came I saw mine uncle; and ifaith, how have you done this great while? Good Lord, by my troth I'm glad you are well, cousin.

Lor. ju. And I am as glad of your comming, I protest to you, for I am sent for by a private gentleman, my most speciall deare friend, to come to him to Florence this morning, and you shall go with me, cousin, if it please you, not els, I will enjoyne you no further than stands with your own consent, and the condition of a friend.

Step. Why, cousin, you shall command me, and 'twere twise so farre as Florence to do you good; what doe you think I will not go with you. I protest.

Lor. ju. Nay, nay, you shall not protest.

Step. By God, but *I* will, sir, by your leave, Ile protest more to my friend than Ile speake of at this time.

Lor. ju. You speake very well, sir.

Step. Nay, not so, neither; but I speake to serve my turne.

Lor. ju. Your turne? why cousin, a gentleman of so faire sort as you are; of so true cariage; so speciall good parts; of so deare and choice estimation; one whose lowest condition beares the stampe of a great spirit; nay, more, a man so grac'd, guilded, or rather (to use a more fit Metaphor) tinfoyld by nature, (not that you have a leaden constitution, couze, although perhaps a little

Digitized by Google

inclining to that temper, and so the more apt to melt with pittie, when you fall into the fire of rage) but for your lustre onely, which reflects as bright to the world as an old Ale-wives pewter againe a good time; and will you now (with nice modestie) hide such reall ornaments as these, and shadow their glorie as a Millaner's wife doth her wrought stomacher, with a smoakie lawne, or a blacke cipresse? Come, come, for shame doe not wrong the qualitie of your desert in so poore-kind; but let the *Idea* of what you are, be portraied in your aspect, that men may reade in your lookes: *Here within this place is to be seene, the most admirable rare and accomplisht worke of nature.* Cousin, what think you of this?

Step. Marry, I do think, of it, and I will be more melancholie, and gentlemanlike than I have beene, I doe ensure you.

Lor. ju. Why this is well: now if I can but hold up this humor in him, as it is begun, *Catso* for *Florence*, match him and she can. Come, cousin.

Step. Ile follow you.

Lor. ju. Follow me? you must go before.

Step. Must I? Nay then I pray you show me, good cousin.

[*Exeunt.*

Scena Tertia.

Enter Signior Matheo, *to him* Cob.

Mat. I thinke this be the house: what howgh?

Cob. Who's there? oh Signior *Matheo*, God give you good morrow, sir.

Mat. What? Cob? how doest thou, good Cob! Doest thou inhabite here, Cob?

Cob. I, sir. I and my lineage have kept a poore house in our daies.

Mat. Thy lineage, *monsieur* Cob? what lineage? what lineage?

Cob. Why, sir, an ancient lineage and a princely; mine ancetrie came from a king's loynes, no worse man; and yet no man neither, but *Herring* the king of fish, one of the monarches of the world, I assure you. I doe fetch my pedigree and name from the first redde herring that was eaten in *Adam and Eves* kitchen: his Cob was my great, great, mighty great grandfather.

Mat. Why mightie? why mightie?

Cob. Oh its a mightie while agoe, sir, and it was a mightie great Cob.

Mat. How knowest thou that?

Cob. How know I? why his ghost comes to me every night.

Mat. Oh unsavorie jest; the ghost of a herring *Cob.*

Cob. I, why not the ghost of a herring *Cob*, as well as the ghost

Digitized by Google

of *Rashero Baccono*, they were both broild on the coales: you are a scholler, upsolve me that now.

Mat. Oh rude ignorance! *Cob*, canst thou shew me of a gentleman, one Signior *Bobadilla*, where his lodging is?

Cob. Oh, my guest, sir, you mean?

Mat. Thy guest, alas? ha, ha.

Cob. Why do you laugh, sir? do you not meane Signior Bobadilla?

Mat. Cob, I pray thee advise thyselfe well: do not wrong the gentleman and thy selfe too, I dare be sworne hee scornes thy house, hee. He lodge in such a base obscure place as thy house? Tut, I know his disposition so well, he would not lie in thy bed if thould'st give it him.

Cob. I will not give it him. Mass, I thought (somewhat was in it) we could not get him to bed all night. Well, sir, though he lie not on my bed, he lies on my bench, and't please you to go up, sir, you shall find him with two cushions under his head, and his cloake wrapt about him, as though he had neither won nor lost, and yet I warrant hee ne're cast better in his life than hee hath done to-night.

Mat. Why, was he drunke?

Cob. Drunk, sir? You heare not me say so; perhaps he swallow'd a taverne token, or some such devise, sir: I have nothing to doe withal; I deale with water and not with wine. Give me my tankard there, ho. God be with you, sir, it's sixe a clocke. I should have carried two turnes by this, what ho, my stopple come.

Mat. Lie in a water-bearers house, a gentleman of his note? Well, Ile tell him my mind. [*Exit.*

Cob. What *Tib*, show this gentleman up to Signior *Bobadilla*; oh and my house were the Brazen head now, faith it would eene crie more fooles yet. You should have some now: would take him to be a gentleman at the least; alas, God helpe the simple, his father's an honest man, a good fishmonger, and so forth; and now doth he creep and wriggle into acquaintance with all the brave gallants about the towne, such as my guest is, (oh my guest is a fine man) and they flout him invinciblie. He useth every day to a Marchāt's house (where I serve water) one M. *Thorellos*; and here's the iest, he is in love with my master's sister, and cals her mistres; and there he sits a whole afternoone sometimes, reading of these same abhominable, vile (a poxe on them, I cannot abide them) rascally verses, *Poetrie*, *poetrie*, and speaking of *Enterludes*, 'twill make a man burst to heare him; and the wenches, they doe so geere and tihe at him; well, should they do as much to me, Ild forswēare them all, by the life of Pharoah, theres an oath: how many waterbearers shall you heare sweare such an oath? oh I have a guest (he teacheth me), he doth sweare the best of any

Digitized by Google

man christned—By Phœbus! By the life of Pharoah, By the body of me! As I am gentleman and a soldier! such daintie oathes, and withall he doth take this same filthie and roaguish Tobacco the finest and cleanliest; it wold do a man good to see the fume come forth at his nostrils. Well, he owes me fortie shillings (my wife lent him out of her purse, by sixpence a time) besides his lodging; I would I had it; I shall have it he saith next *Action*. *Helter skelter*, hang sorrow, care will kill a cat, uptailes all, and a poxe on the hangman. [*Exit.*

BOBADILLA *discovers himselfe; on a bench; to him* TIB.

Bob. Hostesse, hostesse!

Tib. What say you, sir.

Bob. A cup of your small beere, sweet hostesse.

Tib. Sir, there's a gentleman below would speake with you.

Bob. A gentleman, (Gods so) *I* am not within.

Tib. My husband told him you were, sir.

Bob. What ha plague! what meant he?

Mat. Signior Bobadilla. [MATHEO *within.*

Bob. Who's there? (take away the bason, good hostesse) come up, sir.

Tib. He would desire you to come up, sir. You come into a cleanly house here.

Enter MATHEO.

Mat. God save you, sir. God save you!

Bob. Signior Matheo, is't you, sir? please you sit downe.

Mat. I thanke you, good Signior. You may see I am somewhat andacious.

Bob. Not so, Signior, I was requested to supper yesternight by a sort of gallants, where you were wisht for, and drunke to, I assure you.

Mat. Vouchsafe me by whom, good Signior.

Bob. Marrie, by Signior *Prospero*, and others; why, hostesse, a stoole here for this gentleman.

Mat. No haste, sir, it is very well.

Bob. Bodie of me, it was so late ere we parted last night, I can scarce open mine eyes yet; I was but now risen as you came. How passes the day abroad, sir? you can tell.

Mat. Faith, some halfe houre to seven, now trust me, you have an exceeding fine lodging here, very neat and private.

Bob. I, sir, sit downe, I pray you. Signior Matheo, (in any case) possesse no gentleman of your acquaintance with notice of my lodging.

Mat. Who, I, sir? no.

Bob. Not that I neede to care who know it, but in regard I would not be so popular and generall, as some be.

Mat. True, Signior, I conceive you.

Digitized by Google

Bob. For do you see, sir, by the hart of myselfe (except it be to some peculiar and choice spirits, to whom I am extraordinarily ingag'd, as yourselfe, or so) I would not extend thus farre.

Mat. O Lord, sir, I resolve you.

Bob. What new booke have you there? What? *Go by Hieromino*

Mat. I, did you ever see it acted? is't not well pend?

Bob. Well pend: I would faine see all the Poets of our time pen such another play as that was; they'l prate and swagger and keepe a stirre of art and devises, when (by Gods so) they are the most shallow pittiful fellowes that live upon the face of the earth againe.

Mat. Indeede, here are a number of fine speeches in this booke: *Oh eyes, no eyes, but fountaines fraught with teares*, there's a conceit. Fountaines fraught with teares. *Oh life, no life, but lively forme of death:* is't not excellent? *Oh world, no world, but masse of publique wrongs.* O Gods mee! *confusde and fild with* murther and misdeeds.

Is't not simply the best that ever you heard?

Ha, how do you like it?

Bob. 'Tis good.

Mat. *To thee, the purest object to my sence,*
The most refined essence heaven covers,
Send I these lines, wherein I do commence
The happie state of true deserving lovers.
If they prove rough, unpolisht, harsh and rude,
Haste made that waste; thus mildly I conclude.

Bob. Nay proceed, proceed, where's this? where's this?

Mat. This, sir, a toy of mine owne in my nonage; but when will you come and see my studie? good faith, I can shew you some verie good thinges I have done of late: that boote becomes your legge passing well, sir, methinks.

Bob. So, so, its a fashion gentlemen use.

Mat. Masse, sir, and now you speake of the fashion, Signior Prospero's elder brother and I are fallen out exceedingly: this other day I hapned to enter into some discourse of a hanger which, I assure you, both for fashion and workmanship was most beautifull and gentlemanlike; yet hee condemned it for the most pide and ridiculous that ever he saw.

Bob. Signior Giuliano, was it not? the elder brother?

Mat. I sir, he.

Bob. Hang him, Rooke, he? why he has no more judgement than a malt horse. By S. *George*, I hold him the most peremptorie absurd clowne (one a them) in Christendome; *I* protest to you (as I am a gentleman and a soldier) I ne're talkt with the like of him, he ha's not so much as a good word in his bellie, all iron, iron, a good commoditie for a smith to make hobnailes on.

Digitized by Google

Mat. I, and he thinkes to carrie it away with his manhood, still where he comes he brags he will give mee the bastinado, as I heare.

Bob. How, the bastinado? how came he by that word, trow?

Mat. Nay, indeed, he said cudgill me: I tearmd it so for the more grace.

Bob. That may bee, for I was sure it was none of his word; but when, when said he so?

Mat. Faith, yesterday they say; a young gallant, a friend of mine told me so.

Bob. By the life of Pharoah, and 'twere my case nowe, I should send him a challenge presently: the bastinado? come hither, you shall challenge him; ile shew you a tricke or two, you shall kill him at pleasure, the first *stockado* if you will, by this ayre.

Mat. Indeed you have absolute knowledge in the mistery. I have heard, sir.

Bob. Of whom? of whom, I pray?

Mat. Faith I have heard it spoken of divers, that you have very rare skill, sir.

Bob. By heaven, no, not I, no skill in the earth; some small science, know my time, distance or so, I have profest it more for noblemen and gentlemen's use, than mine own practise I assure you. Hostesse, lend us another bedstaffe here quickly: looke you, sir, exalt not your point above this state at any hand, and let your poyneard maintaine your defence, thus: give it the gentleman. So, sir; come on, oh twine your body more about, that you may come to a more sweet comely gentlemanlike guard; so indifferent. Hollow your bodie more, sir, thus: now stand fast on your left leg, note your distance, keep your due proportion of time: oh you disorder your point most vilely.

Mat. How is the bearing of it now, sir?

Bob. Oh, out of measure ill, a well experienced man would passe upon you at pleasure.

Mat. How meane you passe upon me?

Bob. Why thus, sir: make a thrust at me; come in upon my time; controll your point, and make a full carriere at the bodie: the best practis'd gentlemen of the time terme it the *passado*, a most desperate thrust believe it.

Mat. Well, come, sir.

Bob. Why you do not manage your weapons with that facilitie and grace that you should doe, I have no spirit to play with you, your dearth of judgement makes you seem tedious.

Mat. But one veny, sir.

Bob. Fie veney, most gross denomination as ever I heard: oh the *stockado* while you live, Signior, note that. Come put on your cloake, and weele go to some private place where you are acquainted, some taverne or so, and weele send for one of these fencers, where

Digitized by Google

he shall breath you at my direction, and then ile teach you that tricke, you shall kill him with it at the first if you please: why ile learne you by the true judgement of the eye, hand and foot, to controll any man's point in the world. Should your adversary confront you with a pistoll, 'twere nothing, you should, (by the same rule) controll the bullet, most certaine by *Phœbus*, unless it were haile-shot: what money have about you, sir?

Mat. Faith I have not past two shillings, or so.

Bob. Tis somewhat with the least; but come, when we have done, weele call up Signior Prospero; perhaps we shall meet with *Coridon*, his brother there. [*Exeunt.*

Scena Quarta.

Enter Thorello, Giuliano, Piso.

Tho. Piso, come hither: there lies a note within upon my deske; here take my key: its no matter neither, where's the boy?

Piso. Within, sir, in the warehouse.

Tho. Let him tell over that Spanish gold, and weigh it, and do you see the deliverie of those wares to Signior *Bentivole:* ile be there my selfe at the receipt of the money, anon.

Piso. Verie good, sir. [*Exit* Piso.

Tho. Brother, did you see that same fellow there?

Giu. I, what of him?

Tho. He is e'ene the honestest faithfull servant, that is this day in *Florence;* (I speake a proud word now) and one that I durst trust my life into his hands, I have so strong opinion of his love if need were.

Giu. God send me never such need: but you said you had somewhat to tell me, what is't?

Tho. Faith brother, I am loath to utter it,
As fearing to abuse your patience,
But that I know your judgement more direct,
Able to sway the nearest of affection.

Giu. Come, come, what needs this circumstance!

Tho. I will not say what honor I ascribe
Unto your friendship, nor in what deare state
I hold your love; let my continued zeale,
The constant and religious regard,
That I have ever carried to your name,
My cariage with your sister, all contest,
How much I stand affected to your house.

Giu. You are too tedious, come to the matter, come to the matter.

Tho. Then (without further ceremony) thus.
My brother Prospero (I know not how)

Digitized by Google

Of late is much declin'd from what he was,
And greatly altered in his disposition.
When he came first to lodge here in my house,
Ne're trust me if I was not proud of him;
Methought he bare himselfe with such observance,
So true election and so faire a forme:
And (what was chiefe) it shewd not borrowed in him,
But all he did became him as his owne,
And seemd as perfect, proper and innate,
Unto the mind, as collor to the blood,
But now, his course is so irregular,
So loose affected, and depriv'd of grace,
And he himselfe withall so farre falne off
From his first place, that scarse no note remaines
To tell men's judgements where he lately stood;
Hee's growne a stranger to all due respect,
Forgetfull of his friends, and not content
To stale himselfe in all societies,
He makes my house as common as a *Mart*,
A *Theater*, a publike receptacle
For giddie humor, and diseased riot,
And there (as in a Taverne, or a stewes)
He, and his wilde associates, spend their houres,
In repetition of lascivious jests,
Sweare, leape and dance, and revell night by night,
Controll my servants: and indeed what not?

Giu. Faith, I know not what I should say to him: so God save mee, I am e'ene at my wits end, I have tolde him inough, one would thinke, if that would serve: well, he knowes what to trust to for me: let him spend, and spend, and domineere till his hart ake; and he get a peny more of me, I'le give him this eare.

Tho. Nay good Brother, have patience.

Giu. 'S blood, he mads me I could eate my very flesh for anger I marle you will not tell him of it, how he disquiets your house.

Tho. O there are divers reasons to disswade me,
But would your selfe vouchsafe to travaile in it,
(Though but with plaine, and easy circumstance)
It would, both come much better to his sence,
And savor lesse of griefe, and discontent.
You are his elder brother, and that title
Confirmes and warrants your authoritie:
Which (seconded by your aspect) will breed
A kinde of duty in him, and regard.
Whereas, if I should intimate the least,
It would but add contempt to his neglect,
Heape worse on ill, reare a huge pile of hate,

Digitized by Google

That in the building, would come tottring downe,
And in her ruines, bury all our love.
Nay more than this brother; (if I should speake)
He would be ready in the heate of passion,
To fill the eares of his familiars,
With oft reporting to them, what disgrace
And gross disparagement, I had propos'd him.
And then would they straight back him, in opinion,
Make some loose comment upon every word,
And out of their distracted phantasies
Contrive some slander, that should dwell with me.
And what would that be thinke you? mary, this,
They would give out, (because my wife is fayre,
My selfe but lately married, and my sister
Heere sojourning a virgin in my house)
That I were jealous: nay, as sure as death,
Thus they would say: and how that I had wrong'd
My brother purposely, thereby to finde
An apt pretexte to banish them my house.

Giu. Masse perhaps so,

Tho. Brother they would beleeve it: so should I
(Like one of these penurious quack slalvers,)
But trie experiments upon my selfe,
Open the gates unto mine owne disgrace,
Lend bare-ribd envie opportunitie
To stab my reputation and good name.

Enter BOBA. *and* MATHEO.

Mat. I will speake to him.

Bob. Speake to him? away, by the life of Pharoah you shall not, you shall not do him that grace: the time of daye to you, gentleman: is Signior *Prospero* stirring?

Giu. How then? what should he doe?

Bob. Signior Thorello is he within, sir?

Tho. He came not to his lodging to-night sir, I assure you.

Giu. Why do you heare? you.

Bob. This gentleman hath satisfied me, I'le talke to no Scavenger. [*Exeunt.*

Giu. How Scavenger? Stay sir, stay.

Tho. Nay brother *Giuliano.*

Giu. S'blood, stand you away and you love me.

Tho. You shall not follow him now, I pray you.
Good faith, you shall not.

Giu. Ha! Scavenger! Well goe to, I say little, but by this good day (God forgive me I should sweare) if I put it up so, say I am the rankest —— that ever pist. S'blood and I swallowe this

Digitized by Google

Ile neere drawe my sworde in the sight of man againe while I live; I'le sit in a Barne with Madge-owlet first, Scavenger? 'Hart, and Ile goe neere to fill that huge tumbrell slop of yours with somewhat and I have good lucke, your *Garagantua* breech cannot carry it away so.

Tho. Oh do not fret yourselfe thus, never thinke on't.

Giu. These are my brothers consorts these, these are his *Cumrades*, his walking mates, hee's a gallant, a Cavaliero too, right hangman cut, God let me not live, and I coulde not finde in my hart to swinge the whole nest of them, one after another, and begin with him first, I am grieved it should be said he is my brother, and take these courses, well he shall heare on't, and that tightly too, and I live, Ifaith.

Tho. But, brother, let your apprehension (then)
Runne in an easie current, not transported
With heady rashness, or devouring choller,
And rather carry a perswading spirit,
Whose powers will pearce more gently; and allure
Th' imperfect thoughts you labour to reclaime,
To a more sodaine and resolv'd assent.

Giu. I, I, let me alone for that I warrant you. [*Bell rings.*

Tho. How now? Oh, the bell rings to breakefast. Brother Giuliano, I pray you go in and beare my wife company: I'le but give orders to my servants for the dispatch of some busines and come to you presently. [*Exit* GIUL.

Enter COB.

What, *Cob?* our maides will have you by the back (Ifaith)
For comming so late this morning.

Cob. Perhaps so, sir, take heede some body have not them by the belly for walking so late in the evening. [*Exit.*

Tho. Now (in good faith) my minde is somewhat easd,
Though not reposd in that securitie,
As I could wish; well I must be content,
How e're I set a face on't to the world,
Would I had lost this finger at a vente,
So Prospero had ne're lodg'd in my house,
Why 't cannot be, where there is such resort
Of wanton gallants and young revellers,
That any woman should be honest long.
Is't like that factious beauty will preserve
The soveraigne state of chastitie unscard,
When such strong motives muster, and make head
Against her single peace? no, no: beware
When mutuall pleasure swayes the appetite
And spirits of one kinde and qualitie

Digitized by Google

Do meete to parlee in the pride of blood.
Well (to be plaine) if I but thought, the time
Had answer'd their affections: all the world
Should not perswade me, but I were a cuckold:
Mary I hope they have not got that start,
For opportunity hath balkt them yet,
And shall do still, while I have eyes and eares
To attend the imposition of my hart,
My presence shall be as an Iron Barre,
Twixt the conspiring motions of desire.
Yea, every look or glaunce mine eye object
Shall checke occasion, as one doth his slave,
When he forgets the limits of prescription.

Enter BIANCHA *with* HESPERIDA.

Bia. Sister Hesperida, I pray you fetch down the Rose water above in the closet. Sweete hart will you come in to breakfast?
[*Exit* HESPERIDA.

Tho. And she have over-heard me, now?

Bia. I pray thee (good Musse) we stay for you.

Tho. By Christ, I would not for a thousand crownes.

Bia. What ayle you, sweete hart, are you not well, speake good Musse.

Tho. Troth, my head akes extreamely on a suddaine.

Bia. Oh Jesu!

Tho. How now? What?

Bia. Good Lord how it burnes! Muss keep you warme, good truth it is this new disease, there's a number are troubled withall: for Gods sake sweete heart, come in out of the ayre.

Tho. How simple and how subtill are her answeres?
A new disease, and many troubled with it.
Why true, she heard me all the world to nothing.

Bia. I pray thee good sweet heart, come in; the ayre will do you harme in troth.

Tho. Ile come to you presently, it will away, I hope.

Bia. Pray God it do. [*Exit.*

Tho. A new disease? I know not, new or old,
But it may well be call'd poor mortals Plague;
For like a pestilence it doth infect
The houses of the braine: first it begins
Solely to worke upon the fantasie,
Filling her seat with such pestiferous aire,
As soone corrupts the judgement, and from thence,
Sends like contagion to the memorie,
Still each of other catching the infection,
Which as a searching vapor spreads itselfe

Digitized by Google

Confusedly through every sensive part,
Till not a thought or motion in the mind
Be free from the black poison of suspect.
Ah, but what error is it to know this,
And want the free election of the soule
In such extreames? well I will once more strive,
(Even in despight of hell) my selfe to be,
And shake this feaver off that thus shakes me. [*Exit.*

END OF VOL. I.

CHISWICK PRESS:—PRINTED BY WHITTINGHAM AND WILKINS,
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

Digitized by Google

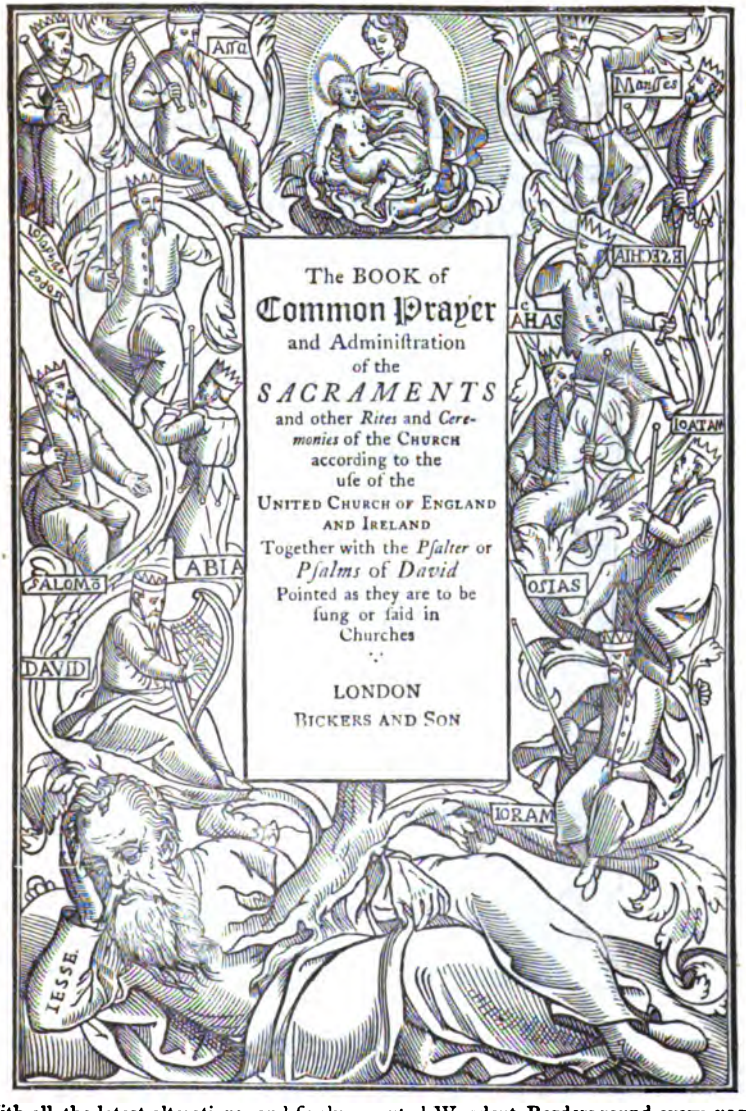
Just published, in large 12mo, cloth, uncut edges, price 10s.; in emblematically gilt cloth and gilt edges, or in morocco, emblematically tooled, 18s.; and in best plain morocco, 21s.,

THE

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

COMMONLY CALLED

"Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book."



The BOOK of
Common Prayer
and Administration
of the
SACRAMENTS
and other *Rites* and *Ceremonies* of the CHURCH
according to the
use of the
UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND
AND IRELAND
Together with the *Psalter* or
Psalms of *David*
Pointed as they are to be
sung or said in
Churches

LONDON
BICKERS AND SON

With all the latest alterations, and finely executed Woodcut Borders round every page; exactly copied from "Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book," with Additions, and comprising ALBERT DURER'S "Life of Christ;" HOLBEIN'S "Dance of Death;" "The Cardinal Virtues;" and on the back of the Title, a Portrait of Queen Elizabeth on her knees.

LONDON: BICKERS & SON, LEICESTER SQUARE.

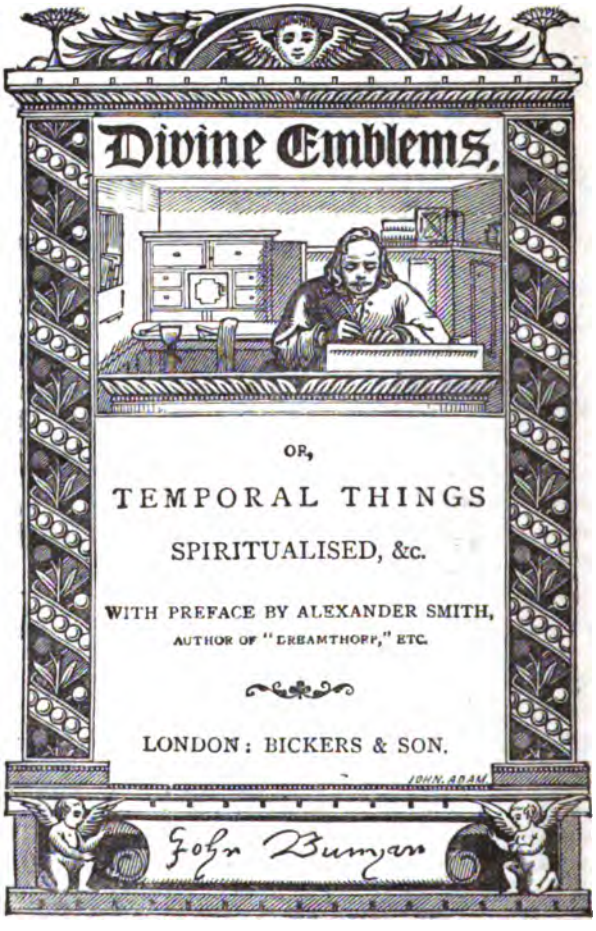
Digitized by Google

JUST PUBLISHED,

In small 8vo, extra smooth bevelled cloth, extra gilt, gilt edges, price 3s. 6d

WITH A

REPRODUCTION OF FORTY-NINE GRAPHIC
ILLUSTRATIONS, HEAD AND TAILPIECES, DRAWN ON WOOD,
WHICH APPEARED IN A UNIQUE EDITION OF
BUNYAN'S WORKS, PUBLISHED IN 1767.



LONDON:

BICKERS & SON, 1 LEICESTER SQUARE.

Digitized by Google

Now published,

NEW COPYRIGHT EDITIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS AND POEMS.

Shakespeare's Plays and Poems.

EDITED BY

CHARLES AND MARY COWDEN CLARKE

In Four Volumes, Demy Octavo, price £1 11*s.* 6*d.*

ALSO,

The Same Text.

In One Volume, Royal Octavo, price 12*s.*

LONDON: BICKERS & SON, 1 LEICESTER SQUARE.

The PUBLISHERS have much pleasure in announcing the publication of the above Editions of Shakespeare's Plays and Poems. Mrs Cowden Clarke's Edition of Shakespeare, recently published by Messrs Appleton & Co. of New York, has been made the basis of Mr and Mrs Cowden Clarke's joint labours. The original Edition, produced after long and careful preparation, has met with great and deserved success in America. As the present issue, in addition to the careful revision of Mrs Cowden Clarke, has had the benefit of the labours of Mr Charles Cowden Clarke, one of the most zealous and successful illustrators of the great Dramatist now living, they believe they are presenting Editions of Shakespeare's Works distinguished by an amount of mature judgment in collating the earlier copies which will vindicate their claim to the rank of STANDARD EDITIONS.

In projecting Editions of Shakespeare without note or comment, the PUBLISHERS believe that they will be acceptable to the general public who desire to become acquainted with the writings of the author, free from the distraction which a multiplicity of notes is so apt to produce, and to those also who prefer being their own interpreters of the meaning of the passages which appear obscure.

As the value of these Editions will lie in the discrimination exercised in the selection of the text by the Editors, it will be conceded

Digitized by Google

that the life-long devotion of Mr and Mrs Cowden Clarke to the study of Shakespeare, their thorough knowledge of the various readings, and their ability to adopt in all cases the reading which appears to be in keeping with the style and general treatment of his subject by the author, form a guarantee that the Editions will present, as nearly as possible, a pure text.

Both Editions will include reprints from the American Edition, of Mrs Cowden Clarke's valuable Introductory Essay, Glossary, &c., carefully revised and amplified. The Four-volume Edition will be printed from a new fount of Longprimer Ancient type, on fine toned paper, and will form four compact and handsome volumes. The One-volume edition will be printed from a new fount of Brevier Ancient type, on toned paper, and will be the most compact and readable edition of Shakespeare ever issued in a single volume. The PUBLISHERS are confident that no Copyright Editions of Shakespeare, of corresponding value and importance, have ever been offered to the public at such moderate prices.

LONDON, *November* 1863.

Complete in Eight Vols., Demy Octavo, published at £4, 4s.,

The Poetical and Prose Works of John Milton.

CAREFULLY REPRINTED FROM THE AUTHOR'S ORIGINAL COPIES.

Including a Facsimile of the Agreement for the Sale of PARADISE LOST to SAMUEL SYMMONS for the sum of £20; together with a Pedigree of the Family of Milton; and a complete History of the Poet's Life by the Rev. JOHN MITFORD.

*** The Poet's own peculiar orthography and punctuation have been carefully preserved, and every care has been exercised to render this the most attractive, as it is the most complete Edition extant. It is printed in a fine large ancient type, and upon thick toned paper; and whether judged as a specimen of printing and typography, or as an evidence of the ability and perseverance of the Editor, it will be found one of the most perfect books ever issued to the public.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WO HOUR
RESERVE
WHICH BORROWED

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED
LOAN DEPT.
RENEWALS ONLY—TEL. NO. 642-3405
This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

AUG 7 1970 7 0
MAY 29'69 -12 PM
LOAN DEPT.
REC'D LD AUG 11 70 -3 PM 0 3
Due end of SPRING Quarter subject to recall after — APR 20'71
IN STACKS APR 6 '71
REC'D LD MAY 30 71 -10PM 30
RET'D SEP 4 1981
FEB 28 1975 2 9
3/28/75
JUN 18 1983
REC. CIR. APR 5 '75
REC. CIR. JUN 03 '83
SEP 20 1981

LD 21A—40m-2,'69
(J6057s10)476—A-32
General Library
University of California
Berkeley

Digitized by Google